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VIGNETTE EFFECTS



CANON G11 RESOLUTION
QUESTIONS ANSWERED

amateur

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Saturday 19 September 2009

Photographer

ADVANCED

Travel and street photography

- Get the best out of natural and artificial light
- How to plan where, when and what to shoot
- Pick the best cameras for candid
- Great streetcraft technique advice



EXPERT ADVICE



Steve Bloom
on using Channels
for dramatic black & white

NEW LENSES LAUNCHED

Sigma's OS mega zoom and Canon's new 100mm macro



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Contents

Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

Great progress



Damien Demolder
Editor

So long as there are people employed in photo technology research and development, and there are companies that

need to sell cameras to survive, there will be new cameras. And lots of them. Every six months or so. It's brilliant, isn't it? I think it's great, because it fascinates me to see where we are going next and where the next improvements will be coming from.

Recently we have seen a pile of new products, and over the following weeks we'll have more. We might ask ourselves whether these new products are necessary, and whether cameras are not good enough already – now judge your answer to see if there is a possibility it is limited by your imagination. Camera engineers constantly introduce features we hadn't thought of, and features we suddenly feel the need to use. When film SLRs got to the point where they couldn't improve, we got digital SLRs. And now DSLRs are really very good we've got the hybrid camera. The giant leaps of progress in camera manufacturing have never really been about the quality of photographs, but the convenience and ease with which they can be made.

Our question of the week

In AP 5 September we asked...
Do you enjoy low-light photography?

You answered...

A Yes, I prefer it to bright light 16%
B Yes 38%
C Yes, but I need some practice 34%
D No, I'm scared of the dark 12%



This week we ask...

Does your current camera really help you to take better pictures than the model you had five years ago?

A Yes, it does **B** No, my pictures are just as good **C** No, my pictures are now worse

Vote online
www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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AP's technical team take to the streets using three different camera types

Send us your pictures

To have your pictures published in Gallery, send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/apgallery for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.



© MITCHELL KANASHKEVICH

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News

“Many of these images are rare and have not been seen before... many are still being uncovered”



COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

AP bags Michael Jackson exclusive, page 6

Canon answers query over PowerShot G11 | Noise reduction key, firm tells AP

Canon issues pixel-count statement

CANON has issued a statement to AP, explaining why the firm felt it necessary to reduce the pixel count on its new PowerShot G11.

The PowerShot G11, announced last month, carries a ten-million-pixel CCD imaging sensor – nearly five million pixels fewer than the 14.7MP G10 that debuted a year earlier.

David Parry, from Canon UK's Product Intelligence Team, told us: 'The pixel count reduction of the sensor is a key part of the Dual Anti-Noise System. Reducing the number of pixels on a sensor of the same surface area allows the individual pixels to be larger and capture more light.'

'Therefore, the sensitivity of the sensor is higher and higher-quality, lower-noise images can be captured – especially important for low-light shooting.'

Parry continued: 'Canon is committed to providing the best possible image quality



for our wide and diverse customer base. The reduction in pixel count... is testament to this commitment – allowing advanced users to explore new shooting opportunities whilst greatly increasing the superior image quality they have come to expect from Canon.'

He explained that image quality is essentially influenced by three factors: lens, sensor and processor. 'Our goal is always to optimise these three components to obtain the best image quality for a

particular user.'

Parry added: 'However, image quality can mean different things to different customers. In the PowerShot G10, we optimised image quality based on a user's need for high-quality, high-resolution images suitable for large prints and creative cropping. Therefore, we used a high-resolution 14.7-megapixel CCD sensor... with a superior quality lens and advanced DIGIC 4 processor for advanced noise reduction.

The PowerShot G10 won critical acclaim and many avid followers.

'Since the G10, we have seen that potential users of the PowerShot G11 and PowerShot S90 have been demanding the ability to shoot high-quality images in lower light, with expanded dynamic range, lower noise and higher sensitivity. Therefore, the Dual Anti-Noise System was developed.'

Commenting on the clarification by Canon, AP's Editor Damien Demolder said: 'It's refreshing to see a company reversing the pixel race in the cause of improved image quality, and I hope this becomes a trend. More pixels does not always mean better resolution, and rarely means less noise. I'm sure we'll see pixel counts rise again, but in line with technological advances that allow a direct and continuous relationship between pixel population and the rendering of detail in high ISO images.'

SNAP SHOT

Milestone event

It started out as a small sports firm in Chicago in 1939 and now has branches across Europe and the US. The company, Calumet Photographic, is celebrating 70 years in business and is marking the milestone by launching a series of autumn seminars. The programme includes the chance to get one-to-one advice on camera techniques as part of a Canon Mentor Week in Calumet's Manchester store, starting on 22 September. The line-up also includes a seminar on photographing children, in Glasgow on 7 October, and one on wedding photography at the Nottingham store on 9 October. For details visit www.calumetphoto.co.uk.

'Unseen' Lichfield

A 'previously unseen' contact sheet showing the Duke of Windsor tying a 'Windsor knot' has been uncovered for an exhibition of photos by the late Lord Lichfield, in November. Lichfield captured the image on 15 September 1967 for *American Vogue*. It will be displayed at the AOP Gallery in London from 4-19 November.

Are you AP's oldest reader?

AP is on a mission to find the magazine's oldest reader for a feature planned to coincide with its 125th year of publication. Anyone who can help should email the magazine at amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com.

Samsung 'NX10' may be ready this year

THE first 'hybrid' digital camera from Samsung, the 'NX10', will not be ready to launch until late 2009 or 'early 2010,' AP can reveal.

Speaking at a Samsung conference in Berlin, Germany, European marketing director Michael Zoller revealed that the camera is at the 'field test stage'.

First showcased as a mock-up earlier this year, the first in Samsung's 'NX'-series digital camera system is expected to be accompanied by a range of compatible lenses – some containing an in-lens optical stabilisation system.

The camera is designed to appeal to photographers who want the flexibility of an

interchangeable lens camera in a body that is less bulky than a traditional SLR.

It is expected to house an APS-C-size imaging sensor larger than the sensor inside a Micro Four Thirds camera such as the Panasonic DMC-G1.

The firm predicts that this segment of the market will account for more than 20% of all digital cameras sold by 2012.

The lack of a mirror box will help keep down the size and



weight of the camera body.

Last year, the firm told AP that the new camera will carry the company's own 14MP APS-C sized CMOS sensor and a new lens mount.

WEDNESDAY

16 SEPTEMBER

EXHIBITION Pastoral Visions by Graham Ovenden, until 18 October at Dimbola Lodge, Isle of Wight PO40 9QE. Tel: 01983 756 814. Visit www.dimbola.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** The Forgotten Caves and Coves of the Causeway Coast by Andy McInroy (whose work was featured in AP last year), until 3 October at Riverside Theatre, University of Ulster, Coleraine. Tel: 0287 032 3232. Visit www.andymciny.com.

THURSDAY

17 SEPTEMBER

EXHIBITION Memories of Summer by Benno Graziani, until 10 October at Hamiltons, London W1K 2EU. Tel: 0207 499 9493. Visit www.hamiltonsgallery.com.



EXHIBITION IPG/Terry O'Neill Award 2009 winning images, until 19 September, at Getty Images Gallery, London W1W 8DX. Tel: 0207 291 5380. Visit www.gettyimagesgallery.com.

FRIDAY

18 SEPTEMBER

EXHIBITION When You're a Boy, until 4 October at The Photographers' Gallery, London W1F 7LW. Tel: 0845 262 1618. Visit www.photonet.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** by Photospace members, until 19 September at TSI Gallery, Middlesbrough TS1 2AZ. Visit www.thephotospace.co.uk.

SATURDAY

19 SEPTEMBER

DON'T MISS London Open House allows access to buildings not normally open to the public (until 20 September). Visit www.openhouselondon.org. **EXHIBITION** The Half: Photographs of Actors by Simon Annand, until 3 January 2010 at The Lowry, Pier 8, Salford Quays, Manchester M50 3AZ. Tel: 0870 787 5793. Visit www.thelowry.com.

SUNDAY

20 SEPTEMBER

DON'T MISS Great North Run half-marathon in Newcastle featuring 50,000 runners. Visit www.greatrun.org. **DON'T MISS** Somerset Arts Weeks 2009 at 90 venues across the county, until 4 October, includes contemporary photography. Tel: 01458 253 800. Visit www.somersetartworks.org.uk.

MONDAY

21 SEPTEMBER

EXHIBITION Living with the Wall: Berlin 1961-1989, until 21 March 2010 at Imperial War Museum North, Manchester M17 1TZ. Tel: 0161 836 4000. Visit www.iwm.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** I Want It All, includes images of James Dean, until 10 October at The Little Black Gallery, London SW10 0AJ. Tel: 0207 349 9332. Visit www.thelittleblackgallery.com.

TUESDAY

22 SEPTEMBER

EXHIBITION Poetic Documents 1987-2008, photography by Stephen Burrows, until 10 November at Southwark Cathedral Refectory, London SE1 9DA. Tel: 07966 158 903. Visit www.stephenburrowsphotography.com. **DON'T MISS**

Autumn Equinox celebrations around ancient monuments such as Stonehenge.

EXHIBITION AOP Gallery Print Fair (prints to buy from £46), until 3 October at Association of Photographers, London EC2A 4QS. Tel: 0207 739 6669. Visit www.the-aop.org.



© STEPHEN BURROWS

News

EXCLUSIVE

Private Michael Jackson images discovered

RARE private photos of Michael Jackson and his family – many never seen before – were unearthed just in time for what would have been the late singer's 51st birthday on 29 August.

The pictures, documenting the star's early years, were found in a collection of music and entertainment photos captured by photographer Michael Ochs.

They now form part of the vast collection held by Getty Images, which says it came across the rare photos recently in its London-based Hulton Archive.

'Many of these images are rare and have not been seen before... many are still being uncovered,' a Getty spokeswoman told AP.

'The images, which include a Jackson family trip to Japan, were originally captured by photographers for Laufer Media, a Los Angeles-based publisher of teen magazines *Right On!* and *Tiger Beat*, among others,' she added.

Getty says the publisher had exclusive private access to the Jackson family.



COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

Michael Jackson at his home in Los Angeles on 28 November 1972. The picture was captured during a photoshoot for *Right On!* magazine

Sigma adds 70-300mm to OS range

SIGMA has bolstered its Optical Stabiliser (OS) lens line-up with the addition of the 70-300mm f/4-5.6 DG OS. The lens, designed for DSLRs with an APS-C-size sensor, will cost £399.99.

Sigma claims that its OS technology allows photographers to use shutter speeds around four stops slower than would otherwise be possible.

The 16-elements-in-11-group lens includes a Special Low Dispersion glass

element designed to correct aberrations, plus a Super Multi-Layer Coating to help reduce flare and ghosting.

Features include a minimum focusing distance of 150cm and a maximum magnification of 1:3.9.

The lens will be available in Sigma, Nikon, Canon, Pentax and Sony AF mounts from the end of September.

For details call Sigma Imaging Limited on 01707 329 999 or visit www.sigma-imaging-uk.com.





SNAP SHOT

Photo course

A Professional Certificate in Photography course has been launched at Nottingham Trent University. Lecturer Hugh Hamilton said: 'Many photography courses are aimed at beginners to intermediates, whereas this is tailored towards people who already have some photographic experience.' An open evening takes place at the university's School of Art and Design on 24 September (5-7.30pm). For details call 0115 848 8655 or email art.professionalphotography@ntu.ac.uk.

Adobe update

Adobe has added a free update to its Photoshop Camera Raw 5.5, to extend raw file support to the Nikon D300s, Nikon D3000, Olympus E-P1 and Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ35. The Photoshop Camera Raw 5.5 plug-in can be downloaded at <http://labs.adobe.com>.

'Assault' fury

The National Union of Journalists has condemned an alleged attack on two photographers who were covering the Climate Camp protests in Blackheath, London. March Vallée and Jonathan Warren, who are campaigners for photographers' rights, were reportedly attacked while taking shots of protesters arguing with Socialist Workers Party members on 30 August. The NUJ urged organisers to 'unequivocally condemn' the attack.

Fees protest

Press photographers staged a protest outside The Guardian's London offices on 1 September after the newspaper refused to pay photographers for re-use of their pictures. More than 900 photographers have signed a petition against the new policy. Among the protesters was renowned photographer, and former Guardian picture editor, Eamonn McCabe.

Wales 'hotbed for terror', photographer told



Committed to defending your photographic rights!

A TRAINSPOTTING photographer quizzed by police after taking shots of some 'interesting engines' at an oil depot says police told him West Wales is a 'hotbed for terrorism'.

Police said they stopped holidaymaker Stephen White because he had been seen acting suspiciously near the oil refinery at Milford Haven.

Speaking to AP, White said he had taken six photographs from 'public land' – a verge at the side of the road.

White said, the following day, police swooped on the campsite he was staying at after tracing his location from his car number plate that had been caught on CCTV.

Police demanded White hand over his digital camera and memory card, but he refused, telling the officers they needed a court order to confiscate his equipment.

White said an officer accused him of 'taking a photo of a secure oil bunker'.



© STEPHEN WHITE

This locomotive, called 'Edward', was among the six shots captured by Stephen White

In a statement, Dyfed Powys Police told AP: 'We can confirm that they sought an explanation from Mr White regarding his activities following a report of

suspicious behaviour at an oil refinery in West Wales.

'In the current climate the public expect us to take this sort of action – and it is our duty to do so.'

When quizzed further, a police source later told AP: 'There is obviously a heightened awareness and fear in relation to terrorism and other types of attack.'

White told AP that he has lodged an official complaint against Dyfed Powys Police and is seeking a 'private and public' apology for 'harassing a person who had been taking pictures in a public place'.

Sony Alpha duo out next month

SONY ended pre-launch internet speculation by confirming the October debut of the Live View-equipped Alpha 500 and Alpha 550 digital SLRs.

The Alpha 500 and Alpha 550 feature 12.3MP and 14.2MP Exmor CMOS (APS-C-size) imaging sensors respectively.

Sony has kitted out both with a new Auto HDR (High Dynamic Range) mode, designed to ensure the

photographer is able to capture a wide range of highlight and shadow detail.

The Alpha 550 boasts a claimed maximum burst rate of seven frames per second and a tilting 3in LCD screen that carries a resolution of 921,000 pixels. The Alpha 500 has a 230,000-pixel, 3in monitor.

Both cameras boast an equivalent ISO that can be set up to ISO 12,800.

Photographers can use

the Manual Focus Check Live View option to help achieve precise focusing for macro shooting when using a tripod, for example.

The Alpha 550 and Alpha 500 are Sony's first DSLRs to include Smile Shutter technology in Live View. The Quick Auto Focus Live View mode is also compatible with Face Detection technology.

The pairing also incorporates Sony's SteadyShot Inside image-



stabilisation technology.

At the time of writing Sony had not released UK prices. It has confirmed, however, that there will be a new power grip compatible with both cameras, price to be announced.



October debut for Canon lenses

CANON has announced three new lenses, including its first EF lens to feature Hybrid IS, all due in UK stores next month.

The EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS and EF-S 15-85mm f/3.5-5.6 IS

USM are touted as versatile lenses for 'everyday use'. They deliver the respective 35mm viewing angle equivalents of a 29-216mm and 24-136mm zoom. The 18-135mm (priced £529.99) boasts a close focusing distance of 0.45m, while the 15-85mm (£849.99) can focus down to 0.35m, says Canon. Both feature Image Stabiliser technology, claimed to deliver the equivalent of 'four stops' of shutter speed.

Canon has also unveiled the EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM (priced £999.99), which features Hybrid IS. This is designed to correct shift movement, as well as angular movement, delivering up to two stops correction at 1x magnification, claims Canon.

For details call Canon on 0844 369 0100.



Epson reveals new photo printer

EPSON has launched a new photo printer called the Epson Stylus Pro 3880, aimed at professionals and photography enthusiasts.

The Stylus Pro 3880 uses Epson's fourth generation UltraChrome K3 and Vivid Magenta pigment inks. It is designed to print images on paper measuring from 6x4in up to 17x22in.

The Pro 3880, which is due out in October, allows photographers to create 'bespoke black tones and clear whites,' said an Epson spokesman.

The Pro 3880 will cost around £1,145.

Casio duo boast 'Intelligent AF'

CASIO has equipped its latest 12.1-million-pixel digital compacts with Intelligent AF, a feature designed to automatically determine a subject's focus and exposure area.

'Intelligent AF ensures a crisp picture without an out-of-focus subject,' claims Casio. Intelligent AF joins existing face detection technology.

The Exilim Zoom EX-Z450

(below left) includes CCD-shift image stabilisation and a lens designed to deliver the 35mm viewing angle equivalent of a 28-112mm optic. The EX-Z90 (below right) sports a 35-105mm equivalent optic. An aspherical lens element is featured on each.

The EX-Z450 is claimed to be able to shoot at ten frames per second

(1280x960-pixel images).

Both offer 'HD' video recording, delivering 1280x720-pixel movies at 24 frames per second.

The dynamic photo mode on both cameras allows users to crop images of a moving subject and combine them with a different still image.

Prices for the cameras, which are due out in October, had yet to be confirmed at the time of writing.



Getty deal

Getty Images has struck a licensing deal with Barcroft Media, whose photo stories include the world's oldest dog, the world's smallest bodybuilder and the largest 'free-floating soap bubble'. The agreement takes effect on 21 September.

Jessops paper

Jessops has launched a new range of inkjet paper from 6x4in up to A3. Prices start at £6.50 for 50 sheets of gloss or satin 6x4in sheets. Jessops Heavyweight photo matt paper costs £8.50 for 50 sheets of A4 and £17.50 for 50 sheets of A3. Visit www.jessops.com.

Wildlife DVD

A Wildlife Photography Masterclass has been launched on DVD. Featuring David Tipling and Chris Gommersall, the 63-minute DVD costs £19.95. For details visit www.gowildtv.com.

Photographer's camera snatched



A JOURNALIST who had his camera confiscated by police while covering a news story has received an apology from the force after it admitted the error.

Paul Foster, deputy news editor of Portsmouth-based newspaper *The News*, complained to Hampshire Constabulary after an officer grabbed his digital camera. He was covering a story about a man who had suffered a suspected overdose in the back of a coach in nearby Fareham, according to HoldtheFrontPage.co.uk.

The incident had prompted officers to search other people on the coach, at which point Foster took pictures of the officers.

An officer is understood to have demanded the camera as Foster left the scene, apparently snatching it from him after he refused to hand it over. Police later returned

the camera to Foster.

A spokeswoman for Hampshire Constabulary said officers are reminded that the only time they have the power to seize cameras is in connection with 'terrorist activity or a breach of the Official Secrets Act'.

However, she was not able to explain why the camera was confiscated in this case. She told AP: 'It is unfortunate that this camera was seized, but it was swiftly returned and the photographer was issued with an apology from the force.'

'The police officer who seized the camera will be reminded of the force's policy in this area.' The force says it operates an 'open press policy'.

'If there is a risk of them filming something inappropriate – a body not yet removed, or a number plate that may be broadcast or published before the next of kin have been informed, for example – we explain this to photographers and reporters and seek their co-operation,' added the police spokeswoman.

Club News

AP's weekly round-up of club news from all over Britain

Rhiwbina Camera Club

The club's new season kicked off on 11 September. Members meet on alternate Fridays, at 7.30pm, at Canolfan Beulah, Pantbach Road, Rhiwbina, Cardiff. For details call 02920 576 724.

Chesterfield Photographic Society

The society's annual show takes place from 1-20 October in the Chesterfield Tourist Information Centre, Rykneld Square, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1SB. Tel: 01246 345 777. Visit www.chesterfieldphotosociety.org.

Sandown/Shanklin & District Camera Club

The club's new season programme includes talks, competitions and seminars. New members are welcome. Meetings are held on Tuesdays at 7.30pm at the Sports Pavilion, Watery Lane, Newchurch, Isle of Wight.


Send club news to: apevents@ipcmedia.com

Amateur Photographer

1892

This week in...

We recently reported on the arrest of a photographer in New York who had been caught recording images of 'federal buildings' (see AP 'News' 5 September). AP's news this week in 1892 carried a similar theme, referring to the arrest of a 'photographic spy' in Brisbane, Australia, and the following story: 'Now the report appears that two Americans were found photographing forts on Canadian ground. The apparatus and plates were confiscated, and the Americans incontinently bundled back into the States.' Hopefully, readers returning from their summer holidays, armed with negatives to develop, had encountered no such trauma. AP urged photographers to take a later vacation where possible. 'The man who can defer it until late in September or October will have many advantages over his brethren of the tripod... atmospheric conditions more than compensate for the loss of actual daylight...'

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OUR WORLD

Nathan Welton: Born in 1977 in the United States. Has travelled the world photographing athletes engaged in adventure sports and horseback riding. Featured in advertisements, newspapers, magazines, and other media, his photos have been recognised with a variety of awards. His wedding photography company "Dreamtime Images" is an internationally known studio.

Photo data: SIGMA 10-20mm F3.5 EX DC HSM, 1/640 second exposure at F6.3.

NATHAN WELTON SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS.

In a Colorado national park, the snow-covered dunes stand out against the deep blue sky.

The striking contrast between the expansive sky, pristine dunes, and people passing through this landscape was captured by the Sigma 10-20mm F3.5 EX DC HSM lens. This super-wide angle zoom lens for digital SLR cameras has a maximum aperture of F3.5 throughout the entire zoom range and its super-wide angle enables breathtaking perspective and one-of-a-kind shots. ELD (Extraordinary Low Dispersion) glass, SLD (Special Low Dispersion) glass and aspherical lenses provide excellent correction of all types of aberrations. The Super Multi-Layer Coating reduces flare and ghosting and the incorporation of HSM (Hyper-Sonic Motor) ensures a quiet and high-speed auto focus.

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Supplied with case and matched petal-type hood

FREE GIFTS

FREE in next week's AP – a folding **reflector** or **white balancer**! **Richard Sibley** explains how these essential tools can improve your images

White balancers and reflectors are among the most useful tools photographers can have at their disposal, and with next week's issue of AP you can choose from either a free white balancer or reflector. These lightweight devices fold down into a pouch small enough to carry in your camera bag. To help you get the most from your free gift, we show you exactly how they can be used



photob★x.

REFLECTOR

Whether you take portrait images or still-life studies, a reflector is one of the simplest, yet most important, items you can keep in your kitbag.

In the images on the right, the reflector has been placed underneath and to the right of the model. This has reflected the natural sunlight back towards the subject, evening out and softening the shadows to the right of her face to create a more flattering image.

The reflector can be used for all types of photography, though. Try using it when taking portraits indoors, for instance, to reflect natural window light back onto a subject, or to reflect light from a lamp when capturing a still-life subject.



Without reflector



With reflector



Without diffuser



With diffuser

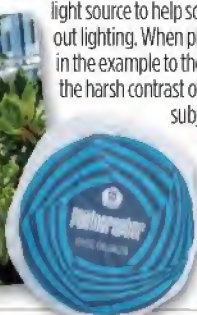


WHITE BALANCER

By holding the white balancer in front of a source of light in a scene, it can be used to set a custom white balance on your camera. For this example I held it towards a bright sky and took a reading. It works equally well when used with tungsten or fluorescent light indoors.

Alternative use: diffuser

The semi-opaque material the white balancer is made from makes it suitable to use as a diffuser. Simply hold it in front of a light source to help soften shadows and even out lighting. When placed above the sunflower in the example to the left, it has taken away the harsh contrast of the light falling on the subject and left a bright but evenly lit image. Position it around 50cm in front of a tungsten lamp, or even a flashgun, to produce a similarly even result.



Review

Your guide to the latest photography books, exhibitions and websites



ELLIS-JACQUES MULLIN PARIS: MUSEE D'ORSAY/STY BRANOT

A History of Photography

The Musée d'Orsay Collection 1839-1925, Flammarion, hardback, 320 pages, £40, ISBN 978-2-08-030092-8

Some books come into the AP office and you know when you hold them that they are going to be good. *A History of Photography* is one of these rare tomes. The book contains more than 400 beautifully reproduced images from the Musée d'Orsay's collection of 55,000 photos. It marks the 30th anniversary of France's first permanent exhibition of photography, and traces the art form from its first practitioners of daguerreotypes through its development as a means of documentation and sophisticated portraiture. Although many famous names are represented, the real treats are the hundreds of lesser-known photos. It's interesting to note the subtle changes in artistic style and theme over the 86 years it covers, making this a collection that should appeal to both fans of photography and history. **Jeff Meyer**



Book Review



THE STONE: CHARLES NIERRE PARIS: MUSEE D'ORSAY/STY BRANOT

© JUSTIN PARTYKA



Exhibition

The East Anglians

Justin Partyka

29 September-13 December. Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ. Open Tue-Sun 10am-5pm, Wed until 8pm. Tel: 01603 593 199. Website: www.scva.org.uk. Admission £4

It is easy to forget there was a time when farming didn't revolve around the latest hi-tech machinery. In his forthcoming exhibition, Norfolk-born photographer Justin Partyka explores the largely forgotten agrarian farming community of East Anglia. For the past eight years, Justin has traversed the length and breadth of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire documenting the lives of farm workers and tradesmen that time has left behind. From small-time farmers to reed cutters and rabbit catchers, his images provide an intriguing insight

into the traditional working methods of a people whose lives are shaped by the rural landscape upon which they live and work. In some, workers clutch armfuls of coarse golden hay, while in others, figures stoop low, toiling over burgeoning vegetable patches. There are 58 colour images, each one a reminder that despite the technological advances of modern farming, there is still a thriving – albeit small and unassuming – community of traditionalists beaver away behind the scenes.

Gemma Padley

© JUSTIN PARTYKA

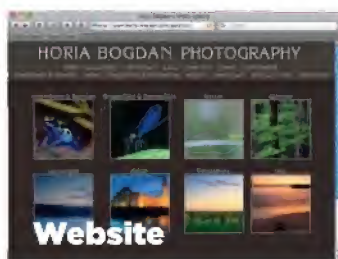


© JUSTIN PARTYKA



www.horia-bogdan.com

Horia Bogdan came to our attention when he submitted his images to the Gallery in AP 12 September. We liked his sweeping coastal landscapes, so we decided to see what else he had in his portfolio. First stop: the all-important biography. Horia, 25, started taking photography seriously three years ago. Currently studying for a Masters in Ecology, he began by taking close-up images of animals with a compact camera for a biology course. When he bought a Canon EOS 400D his subject matter expanded. The eight galleries on the site include images of woodland panoramas, aerial shots of sprawling cities, and abstract images of tree bark and leaf details. Once you've finished browsing Horia's images, you can take a look at an even wider selection of nature photos. Photographer Emmanuel Boitier's work is particularly noteworthy. **Gemma Padley**



© PETE CARR



© PETE CARR



HDR Photography Photo Workshop

By Pete Carr and Robert Correll

Wiley Publishing, paperback, 284 pages, £26.99, ISBN 978-0-470-41299-2

Book Review



Always slightly sceptical of HDR, I was pleasantly surprised by this guide, which really tackles the practice in some depth. The authors start by explaining how you should choose your scene, configure your camera and where you should focus and take your exposure reading, right through to how to blend the images together. They cover the main obstacles, such as moving clouds, and even suggest a number of possible software packages to use apart from the ubiquitous Photomatix. I'm still not sold on HDR per se, but Carr and Correll make a good case. **Jeff Meyer**

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

Letters

Letter of the week

wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card (in a choice of CompactFlash, SD or Memory Stick)*. The sender of every letter published receives a free roll of Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 36-exposure film worth £4.99



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Trains, planes and...

I originally took up photography as a method of recording my transport interests, specialising in photographing aircraft, railways and buses. While doing this I try to respect others by doing my utmost not to directly photograph people, avoiding using flash and by trying not to cause an obstruction.

Sadly, I've given up taking photographs at railway and bus stations, due to a number of unpleasant brushes with the security services. Now I only shoot in areas that are not railway property or, in the case of buses, I photograph on the street. But even here I'm not safe from harassment, as some of the general public seem to have jumped on the 'privacy and security' bandwagon.

Over the past few years I have been subjected to many misplaced accusations about photographers. For instance, I was recently photographing in Weymouth, Dorset, when a car pulled up behind me. The young couple inside demanded to know what I was taking pictures of. I told them and asked them why this was a problem. The female occupant replied that it was unacceptable because there were passengers on the buses and one day she could be one of them.

It is astonishing that what was once regarded as a harmless and legitimate pastime is now considered so offensive and intrusive.

Steve Dunkerley, Oxfordshire

Continue the campaign

I have seen the Home Office guidance issued to the police (available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/home-office-circulars/circulars-2009/012-2009/). It says absolutely nothing new. Although the police cannot stop you taking photographs in a public place, they are still allowed to seize your camera, film or memory cards as evidence if

Learning the ropes

I just wanted to say thank you for the ongoing *Last Resort* series in your magazine. As an IT professional I spend most of the day in front of PCs, and so the last thing I want to do is spend even more time at home messing around in Photoshop when I have little idea of how to use it.

That has all changed with *Last Resort*. It has taught me some great tips, all of which are extremely easy when you know how. For instance, due to poor eyesight I struggle to get horizons straight. However, this is no longer an issue following a recent feature on how to straighten horizons (AP 20 June) – two seconds and the job's done! The same is true of the noise-reduction article (AP 17 January) and the great two-part feature on sharpening (AP 28 February and AP 28 March). These have made my post-processing not only enjoyable, but also much faster than before, and now I finally have some idea of what I am doing when making post-processing changes. In AP 5 September, I found out you can open JPEGs in Adobe Camera Raw, which is something I simply didn't know it. One of the reasons I don't shoot more JPEGs is that I always struggle to correct white balance inaccuracies. Well, not any more...

Please keep the lessons coming; I am looking forward to you breaking down Curves and Levels into more understandable chunks, hopefully sometime in the near future.

I have attached a couple of snaps that are nothing special, but they show the difference between a photo I would previously have binned and the after effects of *Last Resort* help.

Leon Bingham, via email

Keep reading AP and you'll learn something new every week – Damien Demolder, Editor



Before



After

they suspect you are a terrorist. They may not delete images, nor destroy film. What the guidance does not say is why or how they might suspect a photographer of being a terrorist! The fact remains that anyone seen taking photographs in a public place (which could be seen to be a terrorist target), or of a policeman or military personnel, could be construed as being a terrorist. AP,

please continue your campaign to restore common sense.

Robert J Maddison, Dorset

Don't worry, Mr Maddison, we will – Damien Demolder, Editor

Hear, hear

I was interested in the criticisms levelled by ex-Jessops director Tim Brookes at the current state of the

What The Duck



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fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

* Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address



KEITH HUGHES

Bird watching

I read with interest the article *Not just common or garden* by Paul Hobson in AP 1 August, and would like to add my opinion about taking photographs of birds. I have been able to obtain some (what I consider to be) worthy bird shots by attending county shows, fetes and the like, where often professional falconers show a selection of their birds. Usually, they are birds of prey that most of us would not be able to photograph in the wild.

I always find the people most friendly and co-operative to amateur photographers. In return I make a point of putting a donation in the collecting box and sending them some pictures. This is a small price to pay for the opportunity to capture such creatures within easy reach of a standard lens. The picture above was taken at very close quarters with the full co-operation of the falconer who held the birds against a suitable background.

Keith Hughes, Surrey

company (News, AP 29 August), and I couldn't agree more. It seems to be an example of yet another specialist-type shop disappearing from our high streets. Instead, all we get are dozens of shops selling the same things. If I want to buy a basic digital camera, I can think of at least half a dozen outlets within easy reach. But where are all the good old-fashioned camera shops, with knowledgeable staff and a great range of both new and second-hand equipment?

Just a few years ago Jessops was just such a camera shop, but now it seems to provide nothing for the true enthusiast. We may belong to a niche market, but at least we wouldn't be competing with every other shop on the high street. The problem with only providing the same goods and services as everyone else is the fact that if they're 5p cheaper somewhere else, your customers will go there. Please, bring back Jessops as a traditional camera shop (for film and digital imaging). Maybe it will start a trend for bringing back the little specialist shops to our town centres.

Chris Grunsell, West Sussex

The best of the rest?

The Leica 24mm f/1.4 Summilux-M lens is described in the AP 29 August lens test as giving 'the best results in resolution and definition at full aperture of any 24mm lens AP has tested to date'. Does that include the Zuiko 24mm f/3.5 shift lens, which has legendary performance? That was as a true 24mm on full-frame film cameras. How well would it stand up when compared with current optics?

Harold Gough, Berkshire

I regret to having had no personal experience of the 24mm f/3.5 Zuiko, nor has AP reviewed it in the past. It is therefore not possible to comment on its performance, other than to say that Olympus lenses justifiably do have a high reputation. The optical construction could be constrained by the requirement to make them compact, so an Olympus designer informed me some years ago. However, that would probably apply to the maximum aperture possible rather than the performance – Geoffrey Crawley, Photo-Science Consultant

Back Chat

AP reader **Mick Bidewell** argues that the wedding pro must work to survive, just like everyone else

WEDDING photographer Mike Tozer's beef about 'unofficial' photographers hampering the professional suggested that such photographers can 'dilute' sales (Letters, AP 25 July). However, would true professionals be afraid of competition from amateurs, which is what most unofficial wedding photographers tend to be?

I've seen some lamentable work from professionals, and truly inspiring images from amateurs. As the official photographer at many weddings in the past, I never once experienced the ultimate sign of failure: dissatisfaction from the newlyweds. Like Mike, I've encountered 'Uncle Fred' and other guests taking snaps behind my back. Who cares! If pros like Mike can't handle the 'friction' created by other photographers, whether unofficial or just snap-happy guests, then they're clearly in the wrong job.

I was the 'unofficial' photographer at a cousin's wedding a few years ago. The official photographer threw a wobbly at the guests (including me) for taking pictures, claiming he felt 'stifled'. Due to some hitch, none of his shots came out. Had it

If pros such as Mike cannot handle the 'friction' created by other photographers, they are clearly in the wrong job

not been for me and other guests, the newlyweds would have had no photographs at all!

I recently phoned a friend in Essex who got married a few weeks ago. When he told me the astronomical fee he was charged by a pro, I wished I'd offered my services! Professionals who charge such rates in today's

financial climate are being as unhelpful to their profession as the 'unofficial' photographers Mike blames for diluting sales. If the figure I was given was the 'going rate', then it's no wonder many couples turn to amateurs to shoot their big day.

We're surrounded by digital imaging, which in itself has given rise to the number of amateurs prepared to shoot weddings. The check-it-and-see approach afforded by digital cameras means the likelihood of failure is considerably reduced. Yes, we need the desired photography and people-handling skills, but many amateurs possess them in abundance. Isn't that the real issue? Many amateurs tackle weddings with high-end equipment and the necessary savvy to use it. And, while it's true that weddings leave no margin for error, the pro who messed up at my cousin's wedding proved failure isn't exclusive to the amateur!

In the midst of a recession, Mike's concerns for the future of his profession are understandable. But criticising AP for offering wedding tips and lambasting 'unofficial' photographers certainly isn't the way to go.



Your thoughts or views (about 500 words) should be sent to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

Original



To see more images by **Steve Bloom** visit www.stevebloomphoto.com. Steve's book, *Living Africa*, is published by Thames & Hudson priced £35, and is available from www.stevebloomshop.com

The AP experts

Each week, one of our team of experts of Steve Bloom, David Clapp, Tom Mackie and Clive Nichols will reveal the secrets behind one of their great images. This week it's Steve Bloom

STEVE BLOOM Wildlife

The world's leading wildlife photographer is bringing his expertise to AP. Steve has written dozens of books on wildlife photography



Amateur
photographer
Technique

Photo Insight

STEVE BLOOM EXPLAINS HOW HE CONVERTED THIS IMAGE OF STAMPEDING WILDEBEEST TO MONOCHROME AND TONED IT IN PHOTOSHOP TO HEIGHTEN THE DRAMA

EVERY year between August and October, more than a million wildebeest migrate north across the Masai Mara game reserve in Kenya. On reaching the Mara River they stop. Crossing the river is fraught with danger – it is full of crocodiles and there are fast-moving currents. They stand at the side of the river for a long time before crossing because they know there is a chance they might not make it across. Pressure builds up from the wildebeest behind and the ones at the front are nudged forward. Suddenly, one animal will charge into the water and the stampede begins.

The migration season is popular with tourists, but you never know exactly where or when a stampede will happen. The driver of my vehicle recommended a spot where there were few people, although there was no guarantee the animals would cross

there. As with all wildlife photography there is a huge amount of chance involved, but on this occasion we were in luck. Moments after we arrived, we saw the animals gathering to cross. Minutes later, the crowd of wildebeest surged forward.

I was quite close to the herd, but safely in my vehicle on the other side of the river. I was standing on the car seat looking through a detachable roof and had my Canon EOS-1N camera with a 28-70mm zoom lens resting on a beanbag. The engine was turned off to prevent vibration. I used an aperture of f/5.6, which enabled me to use a fast enough shutter speed to freeze the movement of the wildebeest. I took a few exposures at 1/300sec and 1/500sec.

I wanted to capture the majesty of the spectacle so that meant including as much of the scene in my frame as possible. The animals were kicking up



© STEVE BLOOM

so much dust I felt it was important to capture this in my image, so I used a mid-focal length of around 35mm.

Framing a composition is an intuitive process. Everything is happening so fast you have just moments to decide how to take the shot. As a photographer you can learn photographic technique, but when you're out there you are photographing from the heart. If you analyse this image in terms of the 'rules' of composition, however, you can see there are roughly three horizontal sections that create a layered effect, which adds depth to the image.

I took this image using Fujichrome Provia 100 colour film. The colours in the original image were very subdued, almost monochromatic (see picture top left). The light was slightly gloomy, but this was an advantage. If it had been a sunny day, it would have been more difficult to capture a moody atmosphere, and

a sense of drama was what I wanted.

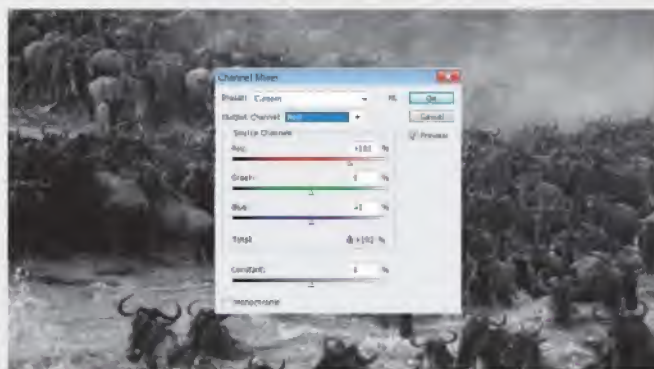
By converting my image to monochrome I could make more of the shadows and the detail in the clouds of dust. But I didn't want this to be a purely black & white image. I felt the scene needed warmth, which could be achieved through subtle toning (see 'Talking technique'). The darkness of the toned image emphasises the feeling of menace that was apparent at the time.

So, with my original colour image on the computer screen, I decided to see if I could enhance the drama I had captured in-camera and reignite the emotions I had felt at the time. **AP**

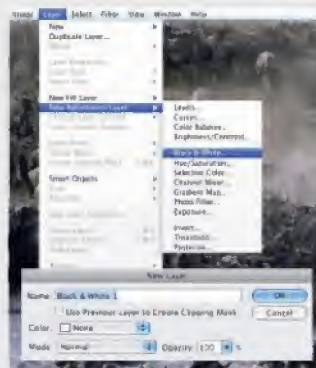
As part of **Amateur Photographer's 125th anniversary celebrations**, Steve is hosting a wildlife photography seminar on 14 October 2009. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/features or call 0203 148 4321

Talking technique

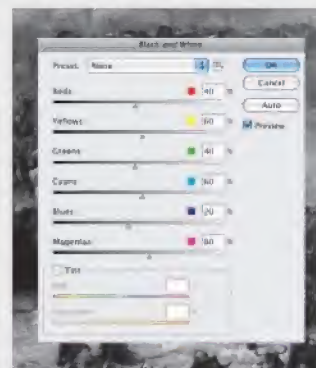
Steve Bloom explains how he used subtle toning techniques to introduce warmth into his image



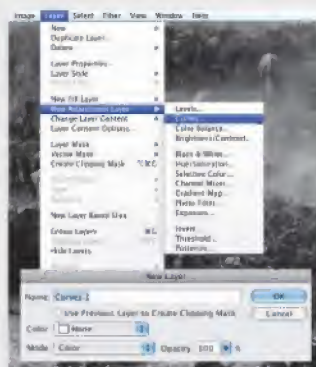
After opening my original colour image in Photoshop, I converted it to greyscale (Image>Mode>Grayscale) and then back to RGB (Image>Mode>RGB). To make adjustments to the tone of the image, I used the red, blue and green sliders on the Channel Mixer (Image>Adjustments>Channel Mixer). This is how I toned my image, but you could also try using Adjustment Layers and Curves (see below).



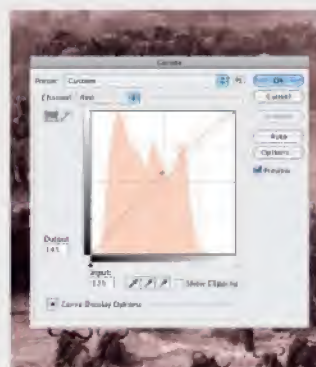
1 First, convert your image to black & white using a Black & White adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black and white)



2 When you click OK, the Black & White adjustment panel opens



3 To start toning your image you need to create a Curves adjustment layer (Layers>New Adjustment Layer>Curves. On the Mode drop-down menu select Color and click OK.



4 This opens the Curves adjustment panel and you can adjust the tone of the image by selecting the red, green and blue curves on the drop-down Channel menu.

How far you adjust the tone of your image is up to you, but the key is to experiment with the different channels and see what effects you like. It's helpful to make a print to see how the image looks, as you can then go back and adjust the tone if you are not happy with it.

Sometimes a documentary shot can have dead space in the background. **Richard Sibley** shows how to create a vignette to draw attention to the subject



The last resort

Before you start

Software

Adobe Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or similar software

System requirements

Windows PC or Mac

Skill required ●●●●●

Time to complete 20 minutes

Technique explained Focusing attention

MOST documentary photographs are taken on the spur of the moment, sometimes discreetly, which can leave little time to perfect composition. Often the result is an image that has the elements of an interesting photo, but needs a few adjustments to draw attention to the focal point of the picture.

Two ways you can draw such attention go against photographic conventions. Rather than adhering to

the conventional crop ratios that have been used for years, why not use a non-standard crop ratio? After all, with home printers, monitors and televisions, amateur photographers no longer have to stick to the conventional 6:4, 7:5, 10:8 or square-format images.

Similarly, most photographers do their best to avoid vignetting or attempt to remove it digitally. However, by adding a vignette you can darken the edges of an image to

draw attention to the subject.

In the image used here, I have tried to produce a cinematic effect to help remove the wasted space in the background and make the subjects look like main characters in their own film.

I have used Adobe Photoshop Elements 7 in my step-by-step guide, but the same technique can be used in the full version of Adobe Photoshop or in the majority of other image-editing software.

Creating a cinematic style

How to remove unwanted space and make your subjects stand out



1 The first step is to make sure that your image is straight. To do this, I have used the Elements Straighten Image tool. Simply drag the tool along a straight line in the image – in this case the railings. I have turned the Grid on (View>Grid) to help check that the image is straight.



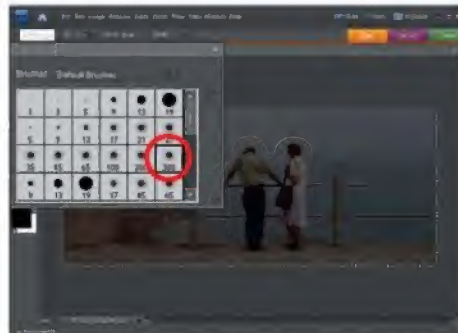
2 Now I need to crop the image to focus more attention on the couple. Rather than using a standard photographic crop ratio, I have opted for 2.39:1, which is commonly used for feature films. Select the Marquee tool and change the Mode to Fixed Aspects Ratio, then enter your desired ratio in the Width and Height boxes.



3 I have created a new layer by going to (Layer>New>Layer). This will help me create a vignette.



4 I've used the Paint Bucket tool to fill this new layer completely black and have then reduced the opacity of the layer to 60%, so the original can be seen.



5 To create the vignette, select the Eraser tool and set a soft-edged brush to 600px.



6 Having changed the brush opacity to 10%, gradually start to create a vignette by erasing the black layer using a circular motion from the centre out. Do this until the centre of the layer has been completely deleted and a nice fade to the darker edges is created.



7 After returning to the original background layer, I have made a few alterations to the image levels (Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels) to alter the contrast of the image.



8 Similarly, I have used the Hue/Saturation feature (Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation) to reduce the saturation slightly.



9 The final stage is to flatten the image, followed by a further slight tweak of the Levels (Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels). If you like, you can also add a black letterbox-style border for an even more cinematic feel. To do this, simply select Image>Resize>Canvas Size, and with the relative box checked add 30% to the height. When the anchor point is set to the middle – indicated by arrows pointing away from every side the box – the increase in canvas size is applied evenly to the top and bottom. The canvas extension colour should be set to black using the drop-down list.

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- An illustrated talk by Mike Maloney inside the House of Lords
- Mike Maloney will answer questions and offer advice and assistance

Afternoon session

- A practical session with Mike Maloney in which he will set a photographic challenge, for which a prize will be offered
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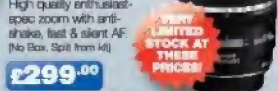
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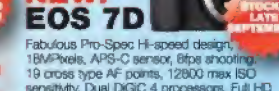
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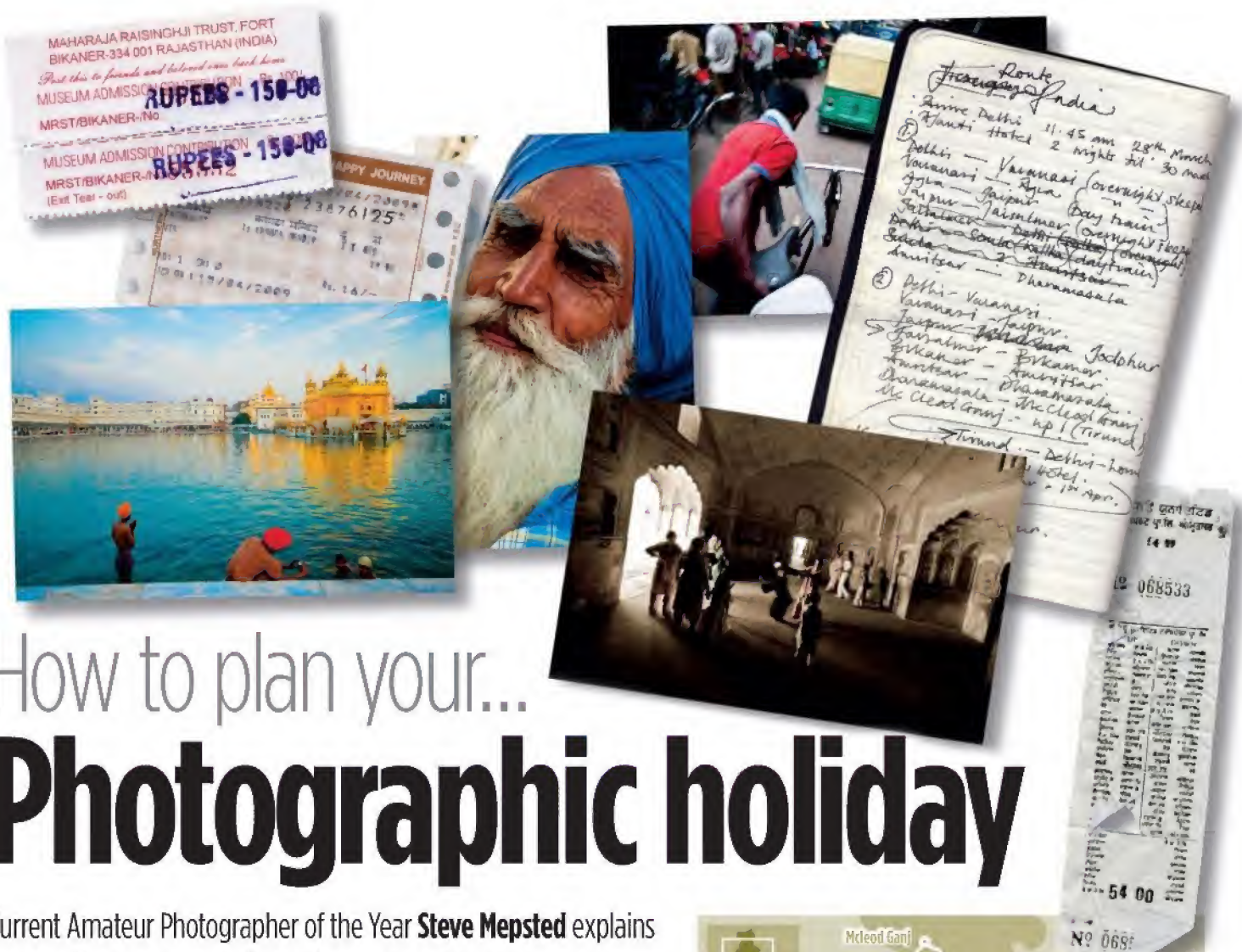
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How to plan your... Photographic holiday

Current Amateur Photographer of the Year **Steve Mepsted** explains how meticulous planning before his winning photo holiday to India led to a more focused, successful portfolio

WHEN planning for a photographic trip, no matter how organised you are you can count on something going wrong. When preparing for my train journey through four states of India, I didn't count on: breaking my fifth metatarsal falling off some railway steps; very nearly being thrown from a horse down a 2,000ft ravine; being trapped overnight by a storm at the snowline of the Himalayas; stumbling upon a huge Sikh festival at the Golden Temple upon arrival in Amritsar at 5am; or having my guidebook ripped to shreds by a monkey that sneaked into my room! However, these misadventures resulted, both directly and indirectly, in some photographs I am very proud of. You might say I couldn't have planned it better!

However, to pre-plan is to take what you do seriously. It implies that you have a subject you are interested in, you know what you want to communicate by taking its picture and that it will be available to photograph. By using this approach you have given yourself a set of measures allowing you to critically evaluate your pictures and learn from them.

Whether you wish to shoot landscapes, shoot indigenous wildlife or explore the

streets of an exotic town, a little pre-thinking will result in a far more successful shoot, and as a result of this planning you will begin to question the content of your pictures, the nature of your subjects, and allow yourself the space to attempt something fresh, original and 'out of the frame'.

Through planning you are also putting yourself in the path of chance and creating luck. I have often heard it said of so-called 'lucky' photographers that they are somehow blessed: everything seems to magically come together in the frame for them. These photographers may seem to carry the mantle of luck with them, but this is often because they have done the groundwork. They are prepared to react to things that could never be planned for because they know what they want to achieve. This allows them to focus, and be receptive and responsive to what is happening around them in the moment. They are in the right time at the right place because they put themselves there.

Defining your subject

After winning Amateur Photographer of the Year 2008 I thought hard about where I would go with my prize vouchers. Once I had



decided on India, and that my chief mode of transport would be the train, I looked at a route that would allow me to get as far as possible in the month I had off work. I decided on a journey through Uttar Pradesh to Varanasi and back to Agra. From Agra I would travel by train into Rajasthan, to Jaipur, Jodhpur, and the desert towns of Jaisalmer and Bikaner. Then up into the Punjab by bus and a visit to the Golden Temple at Amritsar. I wanted to experience riding the 'Toy Train' into Himachal Pradesh and explore the Dalai Lama's monastery in the hill town of McLeod Ganj. This would be a perfect base for a trip to the snowline of the Himalayas before heading back to Delhi and then home.

After some thought I sat and wrote a list of general subjects I am interested in that would sustain my interest and be available to me

That's four states and nearly 3,000 miles in less than a month. It was to be all about the photography.

After some thought I sat and wrote a list of general subjects I am interested in that would sustain my interest and be available to me. The list I came up with was: 'landscapes', 'people', 'travel and transport', 'work and money', 'interiors', 'cityscapes', 'ritual' and 'the street'. Later I added another: 'portals'.

These themes were chosen in order to allow myself maximum flexibility in my activities. There were certain shots I knew I wanted, such as the blue cityscape of Jodhpur, the snowline of the Himalayas, railway stations and trains, some close-up portraits and some street shots of people, candid or otherwise.

Next I began organising my time. For example, if I were travelling for 14 hours on a train journey, I would concentrate on shooting within my 'people' and 'travel and transport' themes. While in the bustling cities I concerned myself with 'the streets' and with 'people', through which I could explore 'work and money', for instance, or 'people' engaged in 'ritual' of some sort. Rooms, hotels and forts afforded me some interesting 'interior' shots. This sub-categorising allowed me to focus on a framework of ideas that I could return to and move between. This was especially useful if I was getting nowhere with a particular theme or if it wasn't available to shoot: I would simply move onto another category for a while, knowing I could return later.

This method kept me active, but also prevented me from shooting wildly at everything and anyone, as it is so easy to do when immersed in such a visually stimulating place. As a series of pictures grew I was able to refine my shooting. I got better at a variety of technical aspects and through concentration on pre-planned subjects I became more visually acute and technically able to respond to an opportunity. Through this defining of my own goals I felt less likely to be influenced by my memory of other people's pictures, or by a fear that the oft-repeated 'stock' view is the only one that people will want to look at. I truly feel that from this perspective of self-definition and structure, photographers will give themselves far more chance of success and also get the lucky breaks we all need. **AP**

The organised travel photographer

The following is a list of some of the things I found useful to me in my travels and which ultimately led to better pictures



ALL PHOTOS: © STEVE MEPOSTED

1 Google Earth
I found it useful to browse places I wanted to visit in Google Earth. The photograph of the Jodhpur city skyline from the fort (above) was pre-visualised using this program. By 'flying over' the area and zooming in on potential angles, I knew pretty much what to expect when I got there. By clicking on the Sun icon I could track the sun over the landscape according to the time of day, take a compass reading, turn 360° around the scene and even check the weather report.



context to your shots (which may well inform you how to take the shot) there will be an opportunity to select aspects of a site and return later. It is very easy when you're on your own in a rambling fortress or an epic site like the Taj Mahal to miss something good.

2 A little research goes a long way
Check out local festivals and times in a recent guidebook. There are also plenty of websites and blogs informing potential visitors of the event and offering useful advice. Also, don't underestimate the value of local knowledge. People were interested when I shared my ideas and photos with them, and through conversation I got some great insider knowledge and saw some places that are rarely seen by tourists, such as the tiny alleys, back streets and markets of Muslim-populated Old Delhi.

Don't be shy of the guide. Often upon visiting a monument there will be a guided tour included as part of your entrance fee. It is wise to take up this offer, as apart from learning some

3 Guide book
Second only to having a good (human) guide is having a good recent guidebook. I used two (for the reasons I explained above) and they are invaluable for contextual history, unusual places to visit, closing times of certain attractions (your plan to shoot the sunset from the fort that closes at 3.30pm would otherwise be scuppered), and also advice on the less obvious attractions where you will be able to tread a less-photographed path.

4 Take a range of lenses
This may sound obvious, but according to your chosen subject you should have a good range of focal lengths to capture most situations. In my bag I had super-wide 10-20mm, 35mm prime,

70-300mm and 50-200mm lenses for use with two bodies: a Pentax K10D and a Samsung GX-20. I enjoy shooting film and took my Leica M6 and a Pentax K1000 to shoot black & white. I also carried a compact camera in my pocket for moments when my other gear may not be to hand.

5 Check the rules
In India it is common practice to charge for a camera to be taken into attractions such as monuments, temples or museums (there is generally a higher charge for a movie camera, so those of you with an HD movie mode on your cameras are laughing). Often tripods are not allowed, but strangely I found a monopod seemed to raise no objections. A monopod also doubles up as a useful walking stick when trekking up mountains. Some places do not allow cameras at all and you must always be sensitive when photographing religious ceremonies and rituals. Trust your instincts, or ask people if it's OK first.



6 Cleanliness...
Finally, check and clean your kit thoroughly before you go and after each day's shoot. You may not readily find a camera repair shop (my 10-20mm lens jammed at 17mm while in the Himalayas). Take a good cleaning kit with you and several lens cloths. Extremes of temperature and dusty environments, like those found in Rajasthan, make for sensor and lens-dirt hell.

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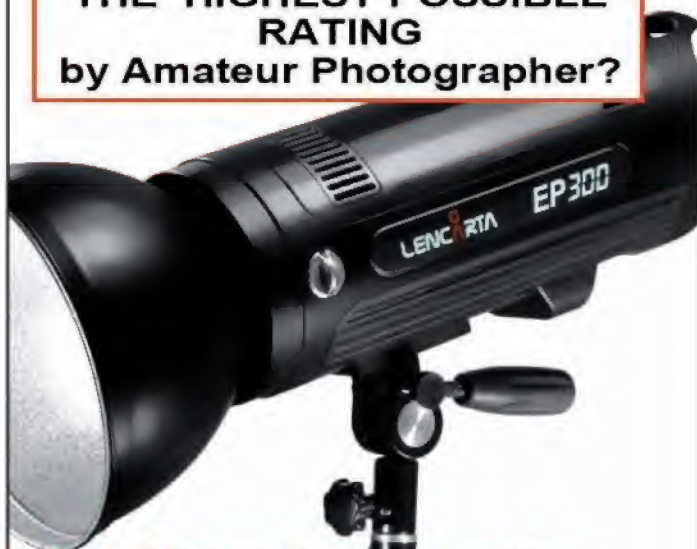
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36mm	420g	12 kg

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Ball Size	Weight	Will Hold
36mm	400g	8kg
44mm	538g	12kg
54mm	755g	18kg



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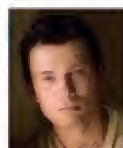


Mitchell uses a flashgun to complement the natural light from the torch in this image taken in East Java, Indonesia
Canon EOS 5D, 24–70mm, 1/25sec at f/2.8, ISO 800

Into the light

YOU are in a bustling street with your camera firmly in hand. Cries of traders sound all around and light sneaks through ripped canopies rebounding off uneven walls. You spot a picture forming in front of you and lift your camera to your eye. As you frame the shot you stop and a thought pops into your head: 'How do I manipulate the light around me to convey everything I feel in this moment?'

The process of deciding how to mould light is one that photographers encounter on a daily basis, but in candid street photography at home or abroad, it is sometimes pushed down the list of priorities in favour of capturing 'the moment' before it



Mitchell Kanashkevich uses natural light and off-camera flash to illuminate the people he meets on his travels. He tells **Gemma Padley** how he gets the best out of the light, whatever the scenario

disappears. Not so for Belarus-born Mitchell Kanashkevich. It may sound obvious, but the way light interacts with a subject is his top priority.

'Light is very important to me, whether natural or artificial,' Mitchell says. 'My training in film-making gave me an insight into the theory of

using light to illuminate a scene. I use light to sculpt my subjects' faces and bodies, and to evoke a sense of depth or create a particular mood. I try to direct light so it hits the subject at a 45° angle to create shadows, which gives depth to an image. It is important to study the





properties of light and think about the direction of the light source. When you are aware of light and consciously seek it out, it becomes an indispensable character in the photograph.'

Mitchell, 28, who now lives in Australia, has been travelling the world with his wife since 2005. To date, the couple have travelled across India and east Indonesia on their motorbike. 'It's a rather modest form of transport, but it allows me to get to remote places to seek out subjects that interest me,' he says.

Mitchell finds his subjects through tip-offs from local people and chance meetings. 'I spend a lot of time in the places I visit and develop friendships with the people I meet,' he adds. 'Establishing a relationship with your subject is the most important thing of all. If the subject is uncomfortable the image will be one dimensional, even

Above: Soft morning light gives this image, taken in north Bali, Indonesia, a golden glow
Canon EOS 5D, 24-70mm, 1/5000sec at f/2.8, ISO 250

Below: The limited light in this Indian temple meant Mitchell had to use a high ISO setting
Canon EOS 5D, 24-70mm, 1/40sec at f/2.8, ISO 1600



if the lighting is perfect. I learn the language to communicate on a basic level, but ultimately we don't need words to communicate.'

Mitchell's kit, like his mode of transport, is modest. Along with his Canon EOS 5D, he carries two lenses with him: a 24-70mm and 20mm. He uses the zoom lens most often and the wider lens for shots where there is limited space and light. Mitchell sets his camera settings manually and uses his in-camera metering system to give an average exposure for the scene. 'I shoot in raw format, and I bring out detail in any underexposed areas and darken any areas that may be overexposed during post-processing,' he says (see 'Talking technique', right).

If he is shooting indoors, Mitchell sometimes uses natural light from a nearby window or doorway, with a reflector to bounce the light onto his subject. If



Mitchell strikes up friendships with the people he photographs and makes sure they are comfortable before taking a picture
Canon EOS 5D, 20mm, 1/60sec at f/2.5, ISO 800

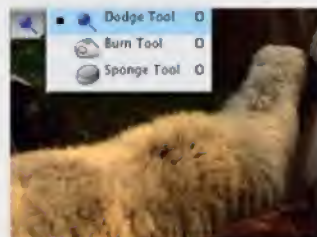


Talking technique

'This scene was very dramatic,' says Mitchell. 'The sheep were kicking up dust and the setting sun cast a golden glow on everything it touched. The light in the original image isn't as glowing as I remember at the time so I increased the vibrance using the Vibrance slider in Adobe Lightroom, which made the image warmer.'

'The Adjustment Brush is one of the most important tools for me because it allows selective adjustments to be made. In the Effect pop-up menu, I used the Exposure slider to adjust the exposure across my image and the Clarity slider to intensify the contrast locally – to accentuate the texture on the backs of the sheep, for example. To accentuate the dust clouds, I tweaked the Exposure and Contrast, and to make the man's turban more prominent I adjusted the Exposure, Contrast, Saturation and Clarity.'

'I darkened both sides of the image to draw attention to the action, and in Photoshop I used the Dodge and Burn tools to bring out detail in the highlights and darken the shadows on the backs of the sheep, the shepherd's back and bushes.'



☞ I shoot in raw format, and I bring out detail in any underexposed areas and darken any areas that may be overexposed during post-processing ☞

Mitchell has an e-book on his website explaining his post-processing methods. Visit www.learn.mitchellkphotos.com for more details



Although Mitchell didn't use flash on this occasion, he has created a silhouette of his subjects by shooting into the light
Canon EOS 5D, 20mm, 1/800sec at f/3.5, ISO 100



A fast shutter speed freezes the movement of the birds in this early morning shot
Canon EOS 5D, 20mm, 1/1600sec at f/2.2, ISO 200



the interior is very dark, he uses a flashgun in a portable softbox with a receiver and coloured gels. 'By shooting with flash, I can capture more detail in a scene and keep my ISO low, which reduces noise,' he says. 'I can also use a faster shutter speed to prevent blurring.'

(see 'Talking technique', below).

Knowing how much flash to use and where to position the flashgun in relation to the subject are key considerations. 'It is about knowing how much flash you can use without killing the atmosphere,' Mitchell says. 'If you use a softbox with your

flashgun, it stops the light from being too harsh. I always set my flash manually and there is a lot of fine-tuning involved. It is also important to make sure your subjects are comfortable with the flash so you don't startle them.'

Outdoors, Mitchell mostly

Mitchell uses his flashgun at a low intensity to avoid destroying the atmosphere in his images

Canon EOS 5D, 24–70mm, 1/60sec at f/2.8, ISO 1000

Talking technique

Without flash



The images above show the difference off-camera flash can make to a composition. This shot of a tea seller in India (above left) was taken indoors in low-light conditions. The light from the candle wasn't strong enough to illuminate the subject, so Mitchell complemented the natural candlelight using off-camera flash.

With flash



In the image above right, the flashgun was positioned just below the lamp and the light was used to simulate the direction of the candlelight. The flashgun was in a softbox and Mitchell used an orange gel to create a similar-coloured light to the flames. The flash power was used at a low setting so as to not overpower the available light.

Mitchell set his Canon EOS 5D to ISO 1250 and used a shutter speed of 1/30sec and an aperture of f/1.8.

The flash illuminated some of the pots and cups in the foreground, which could not have been lit by the lamp, so Mitchell used the Exposure Adjustment Brush tool to decrease the exposure at the bottom of the frame.

By shooting with flash, I can capture more detail in a scene and keep my ISO low, which reduces noise

Mitchell shoots most of his images at sunrise or sunset, as he has done here, when the light is at its most magical
Canon EOS 5D, 24-70mm, 1/640sec at f/7.1, ISO 250



As clichéd as it may be, sunrise and sunset are the most magical parts of the day and I always want a bit of that magic to spill into my images

shoots early in the morning or last thing at night. 'As clichéd as it may be, sunrise and sunset are the most magical parts of the day and I always want a bit of that magic to spill into my images,' he says. 'There is often only a small window of opportunity where the light is perfect. The chance of the subject and light being right at the same time is also

very small. If I want to take a portrait at sunset, I'll look for interesting characters and, if I find someone, I will ask them where they are going to be when the sun is setting. I'll then go back to photograph them.'

Mitchell's aim is to represent faithfully what he saw at the time and his post-processing reflects this philosophy. 'The light has to be right

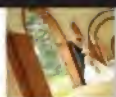
in the original image as it is almost impossible to sculpt a person's face with light you don't have,' he says. 'My objective is to make the final image match the image I captured with my eyes.' **AP**

Above left: The low shooting angle makes the subjects loom large in the frame and draws the viewer into this lively scene
Canon EOS 5D, 20mm, 1/100sec at f/2.8, ISO 800

Above right: When he can, Mitchell uses natural light from nearby windows and doors
Canon EOS 5D, 20mm, 1/50sec at f/2, ISO 1250

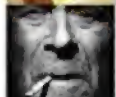
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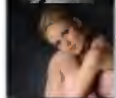
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Tim Knifton
Gwent

Senedd ceiling

Interweaving curves and lines create abstract patterns in Tim's image of a ceiling at the Welsh National Assembly building
Canon EOS 40D, 17-85mm, 1/15sec at f/5,
ISO 200



Pub detail

1 Tim took a meter reading from the building to ensure his image was correctly exposed

Canon EOS 40D, 17-85mm, 1/640sec at f/5, ISO 200

Venice canal

2 A tight, bold crop accentuates the narrowness of the canal and the sharp slicing lines of the walls

Canon EOS 400D, 17-85mm, 1/800sec at f/4, ISO 100

Carousel

3 Tim captures the excitement of this ride by using a slow shutter speed to show movement

Canon EOS 350D, 17-85mm, 1.6secs at f/22, ISO 100, tripod

Tim Knifton Gwent

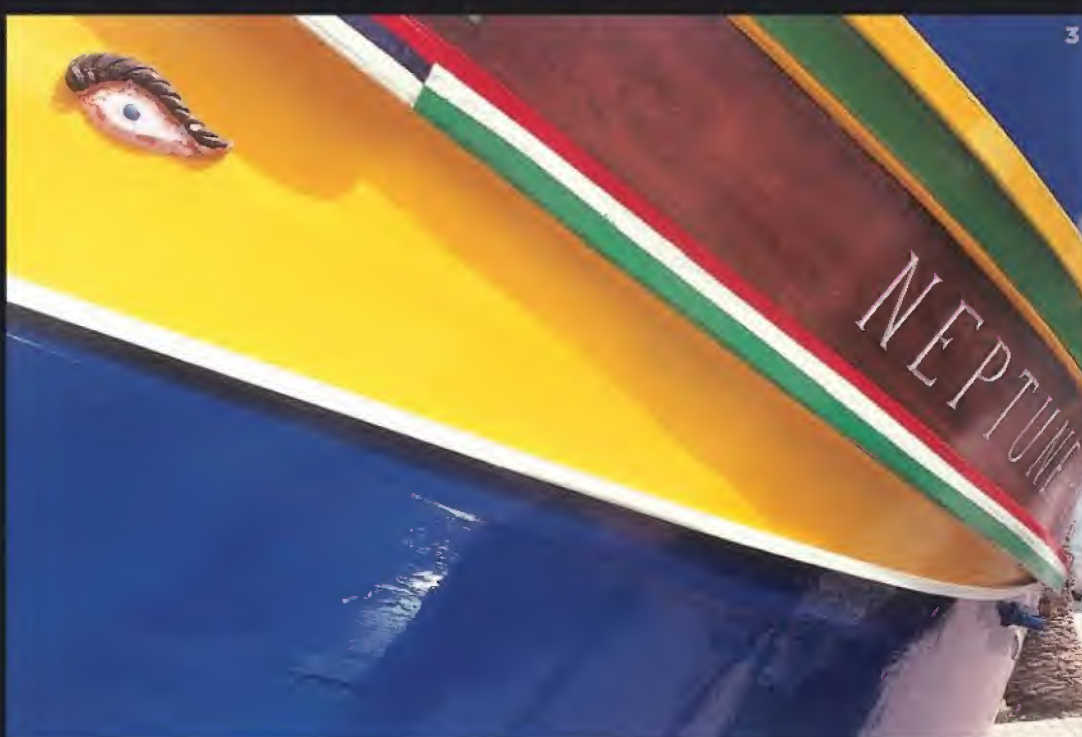
Tim, 36, started taking his photography more seriously four and a half years ago when he traded in his compact camera for a DSLR. While he doesn't have a favourite subject, he enjoys travel photography because he likes 'to explore other cultures'. He also takes pictures of coastal scenes and watches out for events such as car shows that may be happening in his area. 'I photograph whatever takes my fancy,' says Tim. 'If I see something that catches my eye, I'll take a picture.'





Simon Matthews Flintshire

Simon works in sales in the pharmaceutical industry and has been into photography for more than 20 years. The images shown here are taken from a travel-themed portfolio he compiled. 'I enjoy photographing most subjects, but I particularly enjoy architecture, transport and nature,' says Simon. 'Living in North Wales means I'm never too far from some great subjects.'



3

Boat and castle

1 Taken from a low angle, the boat in this image helps to direct the eye to the castle in the distance

Minolta Dynax 7xi, 21-35mm, 1/125sec at f/16, Fujichrome Sensia 100

Canal boat detail

2 By zooming in on a section of the boat, Simon emphasises the flaking paint detail and rotten-looking timber

Minolta Dynax 7xi, 28-300mm, 1/125sec at f/8, Fujifilm 100

Maltese boat

3 A quirky shooting angle and bold crop make the strong lines and colours even more prominent in the frame

Minolta Dynax 7xi, 35-200mm, 1/125sec at f/11, Fujichrome Sensia 100





Japanese lake

1 Luke used several exposures to create this panorama
Canon EOS 40D,
28-135mm, 1/400sec
at f/8, ISO 400, tripod

Glen Coe

2 While framing his shot, Luke walked up the hill until he had the background and foreground where he wanted them in the frame
Canon EOS 40D,
17-40mm, 1/100sec
at f/13, ISO 200, ND grad

Sicily square

3 Luke wanted the warmly lit building to contrast with the menacing storm clouds
Canon EOS 40D,
17-40mm, 1/25sec
at f/4, ISO 500

Souk

4 Light illuminates this dusty market in Marrakech, Morocco
Canon EOS 40D,
12-24mm, 1/30sec
at f/9, ISO 200

Luke Robinson London

Luke, 35, caught the travel photography bug early on. 'I remember owning a Kodak disc camera in the early 1980s that I used on a trip to New York,' he says. 'I still have some of those prints today – not that I include them in my portfolio!' When he is not taking pictures on his travels, Luke focuses on urban scenes to show what life is like in a modern city. 'I am trying to develop an interpretative, rather than purely documentary style, which I'm just beginning to achieve after 15 years of "serious" photography.'

It's the inclusion of so much foreground that really makes this picture. Without the undulating heathland and those sprawling, buckled trees, the shot would be just another lake view. The warm sidelighting is fantastic and the letterbox format echoes those traditional Japanese scroll paintings – Damien Demolder, Editor



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Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor Damien Demolder

Appraisal



Musician, Paris, 1976 Alan Balcombe

Pentax ES II, 50mm, 1/125sec at f/8, Kodak transparency film

Alan originally sent in this amusing picture for the On The Street round of APOY earlier this year. His title makes reference to his subjects being musicians, which I find revealing because I thought the men were drunks, sitting on the curb after having too much absinthe, entertaining each other. It's an interesting shot because it illustrates an important point about street photography, as well as any other kind. As I said about Frank Harris's hoopoe picture in last week's *Appraisal*, the two vital ingredients

are, first, finding an interesting subject, and second, photographing it in an interesting way. Here, Alan has found a really interesting subject, a right pair of characters who are having a good time. Whether the music is any good or not is difficult to tell, but the way they look leaves a question mark hanging over this. Also, the fact that they're sitting on a curb in the street looking rather like tramps raises a whole new set of questions about the story.

However, whereas Alan's subjects are very interesting, the way he has photographed them is not. There is a large space between the two men that should be filled because at the moment all you can see is the front wheel of a moped, the rest of which isn't really in shot. To reduce that gap and lessen the background distractions, there are only two

options. The first is to ask the two men to move closer together, but this is not ideal because the picture then becomes a posed one rather than a natural street shot. The second option is to move yourself. If Alan had moved to one side, and stood on the curb to the left of the man in white boots, he could have shot along the curb with a longer lens, using the 'boots man' as foreground interest and 'harmonica man' as the background or focal point. This alternative angle would have had the effect of moving the two men a lot closer together.

Alan has crouched down a little to get the shot, but it could have been better had he got down even lower, onto his subjects' eye line. Rather than just looking at a picture of two men, Alan would have been able to make the viewer feel more a part of the scene. It would give the impression that Alan did not just snap them as he was passing by, but instead stopped to really take notice.

It's a great subject, and it works well in black & white; it's just that once you've found that gold mine, you've got to work hard to get the gold out.

Whereas Alan's subjects are very interesting, the way he was photographed them is not

How to submit your pictures

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (please include the original files from the camera along with your submitted versions on your CD). Tell us a little about the pictures and, if you can, include details of equipment used and exposure settings.

Send your photographs to 'Appraisal' at our usual address (see page 3). Please enclose an SAE if you would like them returned.



See your pictures in print

Damien's picture of the week wins a £50 Jessops store voucher. The two runners-up each win a £25 voucher to spend on photobooks from Jessops' online service at www.jessops.com

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Shadow man Steven Cuts

Nikon D80, 18-70mm,
1/1600sec at f/4.5, ISO 100

Steven has sent in a collection of his travel pictures, all of which are interesting. What I like in particular are his unusual compositions, with people placed very close to the edges of the frame. He's got some interesting viewpoints, too, including some 'low-

angle' shots, some 'looking through' examples, and some that are 'looking down', all of locals he spotted while travelling. His pictures all stand out as being different and striking.

The one I've chosen to show is the picture that jumped off the page at me. Taken in Trinidad, Steven says he was walking just off the main square when he saw a man throwing sticks down from the roof to someone on the road. However, instead of shooting the man on the roof, as many of us

would do, he pointed his camera at the shadows. Well, it was a good idea, because it makes for a great picture. It's really graphic, and the shadows are sharp because the sun was evidently still very low in the morning sky. It's a lovely warm colour, too.

I love the idea that there are two things going on in this one image: first, there's the movement of the man in the picture and his activity; and second, there's this very static wall. Those telegraph wires streaking

through the top of the picture really help the composition, bringing the viewer in from the right to the left, which is the same way as the man is facing. The two windows are also great, and look as though they have been put in on their sides because they are just too long. However, they also take us down the street, as does the pavement at the bottom of the frame. It's a nicely constructed image, and although Steven came across this scene by chance, the way that he has composed the picture helps to lead you through the shot and to those other points of interest.

Steven says that it wasn't a particularly difficult shot to take, although he had to recover some of the highlights post-capture from his raw file. It is always tricky trying to get the exposure right in this sort of shot, as the white wall will always be a little dark or burnt out, but Steven's final image appears to be just right. There is a lot of detail in the shadow areas, and there's a noticeable tonal difference between the really dark shadow areas near the curb and the shadow of the man, which is not so black.

Steven has achieved a nicely controlled tonal range in his picture, which helps its subtlety. Some people might have been tempted to rack up the contrast to emphasise the shadow, but he has shown that this isn't necessary. He's given it a very sensitive treatment, and has consequently produced a great shot. For that reason, it is my picture of the week.



Chertsey Bridge D Dillon

Yashica FX-3, 55mm,
Kodak Gold 400

These three shots come from Mr Dillon, who has identified an interesting subject in Chertsey Bridge in Surrey. It is good to see that he has tried a number of angles and viewpoints, and in fact the sequence of images reads as a story of his struggle to find the optimum angle for capturing the bridge on a snowy day.

Snow presents a great opportunity for photographers because everything looks completely different when it's covered in white. However, as Mr Dillon has experienced, it's common to have to deal with the problem of an uninteresting white sky.

Mr Dillon has tried a few ways of photographing the bridge, and one of them (the main picture, left, where Mr Dillon has attempted to tackle the sky) has come close to succeeding.

One of his other shots, where the



tree trunk is prominent (above left), has some good depth to it, far more so than the third shot, where Mr Dillon perhaps got desperate and moved to the other side of the bridge, photographing the bench. This latter image doesn't work because the lamp posts on the bridge, and the bridge itself, are hidden by the trees.

This brings me back to the main image, where Mr Dillon has moved into the trees and shot through an opening in the branches, creating a nice frame around part of the bridge

and the water. This framing technique is a great trick, and it would greatly enhance the thousands of pictures taken every year when we have uninteresting skies. The branches create a sense of depth, as they give the impression we are looking through something. They also add interest to the top part of the picture, which would otherwise be completely white.

It's a little unfortunate, though, that in employing this technique Mr Dillon has obscured one of the most interesting aspects of the bridge:



the lamp posts. We are also seeing rather too much foreground snow and not enough river, and I can't help feeling that if Mr Dillon had moved slightly to the right and angled the camera more to the left, he could have got quite a different view. Plus, by moving down, he could have captured the lamp posts up against the white sky. However, it's a great effort, and his pictures are quite pleasing and nice to look at. It's just that the main picture (left) could have been really great.

Testbench

Forthcoming tests

In the next few months AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Nikon	D300s	Sep
Canon	Pixma Pro 9500 II	Sep
Sigma	10-20mm f/3.2 vs	
Tokina	12-24mm f/4	Sep
Samsung	ST550	Oct

Welcome to our test, reviews and advice section. Over the next few pages we will present this week's equipment tests, reader questions and technique pointers

Our guarantee to you

All our tests are conducted by people who understand the product area, as well as photography. We aim to discover any shortcomings, as well as finding those aspects that deserve praise. All our tests are thorough, honest and independent

Yongnuo Off-Camera Flash Cord (Canon fit) £40

LOOKING remarkably similar to the Canon OC-E3 Off-Camera Shoe Cord, the Yongnuo version betters it by having a coiled cord almost twice as long. The cord allows you to use a compatible Canon Speedlite at up to one metre from the camera's hotshoe.

Most importantly, the cord maintains full E-TTL II functionality, so a compatible flashgun can be used as normal with Canon EOS and G-series cameras. To hold a flashgun in position off-camera, the hotshoe attached to the cord can be fitted to another hotshoe, such as the one found on a camera bracket. It can also be attached to a tripod via its 1/4 tripod thread mount.

Richard Sibley

● For more information call David Leung on 0208 590 3268



TopTec Rechargeable DV60-LED Camera Light Around £46

THE TopTec Rechargeable DV60-LED Camera Light is a panel of 60 LEDs that provides illumination for images and can be attached to a camera's hotshoe. Unlike the more expensive Litepanels MicroPro softlight (reviewed AP 8 August), the TopTec Camera Light doesn't have adjustable brightness control, instead having just an on or off switch. It also isn't powered using AA batteries, but uses an NP-F750 4,600mAh Lithium Ion battery. While this provides hours of use, the battery is rather bulky once placed on the rear of the light, especially given that the hotshoe attaching the light to the camera is made of plastic.

However, the hotshoe adapter mounts and grooves on the edges of the light are a nice touch. They allow a series of lights to be locked together to form a larger panel, which is a more economical option than the larger professional LED panels that are available.

When using the DV60 to light video taken with both a Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX3 and a Nikon D300s, neither camera showed any signs that the LED lights produced flicker. Although the white balance of the LEDs seemed a little blue, this can be corrected by setting a custom white balance.

The only downside is that the battery charger supplied has only a US plug fitted. The charger does accept a 100-240V input, though, so it can be used with a standard US-to-UK plug adapter.

Richard Sibley

● For more information or to purchase visit www.gadget.brandoo.com



Street Challenge

AP's technical team of **Barney Britton**, **Richard Sibley** and **Angela Nicholson** head for the streets to get the best images they can using three different camera types

ONE of the great things about street photography is that you don't need any specialist kit, as just about any camera or lens will do the job. However, you do need to be alert to the possibilities around you and make sure you are ready for action. So, for this challenge, AP's technical team each used a different type of camera and set out to get a few shots. They also had to gauge the response of their subjects and the people around them.

Wanting something small and

discreet, Barney Britton selected Ricoh's latest compact digital camera, the GR Digital III, with a fixed 28mm effective focal length optic. At the other extreme, Richard Sibley opted for a DSLR, the Nikon D300, giving him access to a huge range of different focal length lenses, a dependable AF system and excellent low-light capability. Meanwhile, Angela Nicholson ventured out with Panasonic's most recent Micro Four Thirds camera, the compact-camera-styled hybrid Lumix DMC-GF1. Read on to find out who had the most enjoyable time, who got the best shots and whether there was any 'unpleasantness' with officialdom.



The compact camera

Ricoh GR Digital III



Small cameras are ideal for grab shots because they don't weigh you down, and they're less obtrusive than a DSLR. **Barney Britton** took to the streets of London in the hope of getting a classic street study

I MUST admit to a feeling of apprehension when the idea of a street photography challenge was first suggested for this issue. Like many photographers, I've never been particularly comfortable having my photograph taken, and consequently I am very aware of other people's right to privacy when I have a camera in my hand. I could never be a modern-day Henri Cartier-Bresson, if only because I'd feel the need to ask my subject's permission before

taking every shot, which hardly makes for spontaneous images.

So for me, this challenge was as much about facing my own discomfort with the idea of candid street photography as it was about getting some decent pictures.

The camera

My choice of camera, the Ricoh GR Digital III, is ideal for street photography in one sense because it is small, light, inconspicuous and



almost silent in operation. However, I have found that its fixed 28mm (equivalent) lens means that you can't stand back and get the shot from a distance. Instead, you have to get in close, which partly negates the advantages of its diminutive size. After all, it is difficult to take someone's picture from a metre or so away and not get noticed. I'd have been much more comfortable shooting from half a mile away with a 600mm lens, but that wasn't an option.

Despite my worries, I was pretty sure that the GR Digital III's fast-aperture, high-quality lens and responsive AF system would allow me to get some pictures. However, it was clear that it wouldn't be easy.

Getting started

Before I started worrying about pointing my camera in people's faces on the streets of London, I began by looking for patterns, and found objects that I could compose an image around. The image above left was taken on the bank of the Thames, near London Bridge, and it appealed to me because of the various converging and diverging lines. I framed the shot so that the lifted cover and the printed sign mirror each other, and I waited for someone to walk just into the frame to add a different perspective. I love the sign on the crowd barrier that

states 'More London'. More London is the name given to this particular area, which is a recently developed part of the borough of Southwark, but taken out of context, in an image of an anonymous portion of paving, it has a range of possible interpretations. This image is almost completely monochromatic, so I decided to convert it to black & white using the Channel Mixer in Photoshop and add a grain effect.

My final image

The Ricoh GR Digital III has a fixed lens with a focal length equivalent to 28mm, which means that unlike a zoom, you can't just 'see' a shot and adjust the focal length of the lens to fit. When I was out getting the pictures for this article I saw a lot of scenes unfolding that would have made good photos, but they were too far away to capture with a wideangle lens. I soon became used to altering my perspective, though, and 'seeing' in the wideangle format.

My favourite image from the day's shooting with the GR Digital III is a good example of this approach to 'seeing' a picture. An elderly couple

were sitting next to the Thames looking at the Houses of Parliament, and I knew that if I moved behind them to follow their gaze the 28mm focal length would be ideal to capture the entire sweep of the scene. This image is composed entirely on the horizontal plane, and I like the way the two figures are sitting far enough apart so they echo the architectural details of the Houses of Parliament.

I used the GR Digital III's virtual spirit level to ensure that the horizon was straight, and disabled the focus confirmation beep and shutter sound to make sure that the camera fired silently. I cropped the image into the 16:9 format to accentuate the horizontal composition, and for the classic 'reportage' look I made a high-contrast black & white conversion and added a film grain effect.

Final thoughts

Although I was a little apprehensive about this challenge, I am very pleased with how well the Ricoh GR Digital III coped with the particular demands of street photography. There is no doubt that a fixed focal length lens is a limiting factor, made

Above left: I love the patterns in this monochromatic street scene, and the sign 'More London' is ambiguous and amusing

Above: The 28mm focal length of the Ricoh GR Digital III's lens suited this horizontal study perfectly

all the more limiting by the fact that 28mm is a wider field of view than I would have liked. However, the challenge was to find scenes that fit the equipment I was using, rather than fitting the equipment around the scene as I would have instinctively done with a zoom lens. I was worried that the 28mm focal length would force me into uncomfortably close proximity with my subjects, but in the end the image that I am happiest with, of the couple overlooking the Houses of Parliament, was taken only a few metres away from them. Despite this proximity, the picture feels intimate, without me or the camera being obtrusive. The GR Digital III's silent shutter release meant that they never even knew I was there.

“I saw a lot of scenes unfolding that would have made good photos, but were too far away to capture with a wideangle lens”

The DSLR

Nikon D300



Armed with a Nikon D300, would **Richard Sibley** find a DSLR too bulky and conspicuous for street photography?

WITH the largest and heaviest camera in this challenge, I was going to have a problem taking photographs discreetly. If you look through any guide to the great photographers you will see that in the classic period of documentary photography a Leica rangefinder was the camera of choice. Robert Frank, Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson all famously used Leicas rather than the larger press or TLR cameras.

As I was using a larger camera than either Barney or Angela for this challenge, I wondered how much more attention I would draw to myself

and whether the camera's handling would affect the types of images I was able to capture. The approach I was going to take would be largely dictated by my choice of lenses.

Lens choice

I had a vast range of lenses to choose from for this DSLR. A huge telephoto optic would obviously allow me to stand far away and stealthily stalk my prey like a paparazzi photographer, but for close proximity photographs it would be useless and would draw a lot of unwanted attention.

I therefore opted for a Sigma 70–200mm f/2.8 lens, which would get me close to the subject without being too big. It is still by no means a discreet lens, so I decided that I would also take a Nikon 50mm f/1.8 lens.

Finally, I packed a Nikkor 18–200mm f/3.5–5.6 VR optic. While not as sharp as the other two lenses, it is something of a one-stop solution because it provides both a wideangle viewpoint and a telephoto magnification suitable for street photographs.

Setting up the camera

I set the D300 to a sensitivity of ISO 400, which would allow me to use an aperture of around f/8. This was because I thought I might have to take a quick photograph and I needed to make sure there

was a good depth of field in case the subject moved quickly from the focus point, or if the focus was slightly off. A setting of ISO 400 would also allow me to use a fast enough shutter speed to prevent camera shake and freeze any subject movement.

How I metered the exposure varied, but generally I left the camera on aperture priority and occasionally switched the metering back and forth between centreweighted and matrix (evaluative), depending on the scene.

At 70mm, my lens wasn't quite wide enough to get the entire scene in as I saw it, but the off-centre composition works well





Out and about

For most situations I found that the 70–200mm lens was too long to use in a built-up area. It did prove useful in more open areas, such as parks and city squares, though. When set to 200mm, I was able to use the lens to photograph people from a distance, although the physical size of the lens did draw attention. A few people waved directly at the camera!

Using the 70–200mm caused too much attention on one occasion in particular. I spotted a woman sweeping the floor between two mannequins in a designer fashion store (see left). I stood across the street and tried to frame a shot. Even by the time I had set the lens to the 70mm position, the shop assistant had recoiled to the corner of the window, very conscious that she was going to be photographed.

Even the composition of the shot suffered as the 70mm focal length was too long. The 50mm lens would have been far better in this situation. Its wider angle of view would have left more of the surroundings of the scene in the frame, which helps to add context. The main advantage, though, was that the size and speed of the fixed lens would have made me far less conspicuous.

I still got quite a good shot, but with fewer shop surroundings and with the subject in the corner rather than sweeping in the centre. The final image isn't as strong as the shot I had originally seen.

Of the three lenses, I found that the 18–200mm f/3.5–5.6 was the most useful. While optically it isn't as sharp as the other two lenses, it provides a fantastic focal range that enabled me to cover most street

photography situations. Not having to change lenses and possibly miss out on an opportunity is the main benefit of this lens. Purists may dislike the image quality of this optic, but I'd rather an image required a little post-capture reshaping than miss a shot because I needed to change lenses. For this reason I would recommend an 18–200mm focal length lens to those who enjoy street and travel photography. The fact that it means you don't have to carry an extra lens or two also saves weight in your bag, which is a bonus if you are out taking photographs for the day.

Security

I imagined that while walking around central London taking photographs of people in open public spaces I would have been stopped by the police or an overenthusiastic security guard or two. In fact, I wasn't stopped or questioned once. I must have walked past six Police Community Support Officers, and even the two fully fledged police officers didn't bat an eyelid when I strolled past them with my Nikon D300 and Sigma 70–200mm lens in hand.

Perhaps it was due to the fact that I was among the tourists in central London, many of whom were also using DSLR cameras. I also noticed two professional-looking photographers taking images in full view of the police without being challenged.

Maybe the police are starting to become less paranoid, or they don't pay too much attention to photographers in places that regularly attract tourists. I suspect that the situation may be different in smaller towns, where people may not be

Above left: I cropped this image to the 5:4 format to concentrate attention on the main two (or should that be three?) figures

Above right: It is hard to avoid taking photographs of people's backs when getting candid, but I like the vertical lines in this shot

so used to others walking around in public taking pictures of everything.

Results

This challenge was harder than I expected it to be. With stories of photographers being stopped by the police or being suspected by the general public, it was difficult to build up the confidence to take images of people openly. Once I got to grips with the fact that most people in a city aren't too concerned about having a camera pointed at them, I became more confident, although I didn't go as far as walking up to someone and pointing a camera in his or her face!

One technique I found useful was photographing a location and waiting for someone to enter the scene, which makes it seem as though you are photographing the location rather than the person. Similarly, using a wideangle lens and placing your subject to the side of the image makes it look as if the camera isn't pointing at them at all.

A DSLR of the size of a Nikon D300 was probably not the best tool for the job. While the 50mm and 18–200mm lenses were a good choice, a smaller DSLR such as the Olympus E-420 with its 25mm pancake lens may be a better option for those who wish to try documentary photography with a DSLR.

The hybrid camera

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1



Its compact design and high-quality images make the Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1 very desirable. **Angela Nicholson** carried it everywhere for a few days

I HAD a stroke of luck in the lead-up to this challenge as Panasonic released the Lumix DMC-GF1, a compact-styled Micro Four Thirds camera, with DSLR-type control and interchangeable lenses. As I had been testing the camera, it made sense for me to carry on using it for our street photography challenge. Of course, I really just wanted the advantage of a small, well-specified camera with a Four Thirds sensor that would enable me to capture better-quality images than the average compact camera. I hoped that its relatively small proportions would help me conceal my street photographer credentials and allow me to assume the identity an overenthusiastic sightseer snapping away, happily recording my day out. In true street photographer style, I tried to avoid drawing attention to the

camera and carried it cupped in my hand while I wasn't shooting.

As the days went by I became increasingly aware that my plan was working and the public regarded this hybrid camera as a compact model and not nearly as noteworthy as an SLR. Even a security guard, who was clearly keeping an eye on me as I crawled around the floor of a popular London shopping arcade in pursuit of illicit photographs of the market-style stalls, must have decided I was harmless and left me alone.

It's not what you do...

My brief encounter with the security guard was a salient reminder that non-photographers take pictures in a different way to enthusiasts. They lack the intensity that drives a photographer to lie in wet grass, wear holes in the elbows of their jacket and wait for the light to come good. Less driven snappers take a shot, look at it on the back of the camera and either move on, or take just a couple more. They don't shoot a subject from all angles, make frequent changes to their camera settings and spend 15 minutes in the same spot. Sizing up a subject and considering the best shooting angle or exposure settings before raising the camera to the eye makes you much less conspicuous as a photographer.

On several occasions when I spotted a likely distant subject, I set up the camera as I wanted and then strode purposely forward looking at something other than my real target. Then, when I reached my chosen shooting position, I carefully framed my dummy subject (and in some cases



I was only able to take one shot of the dog tied to its bespoke van before the well-meaning owner moved in to get the dog to 'pose properly' for me

I even photographed it), before quickly recomposing and taking a shot with my real subject in sharp focus. On one occasion I spotted a couple of workers in a little alley having a cigarette break. They looked around as I approached, and watched while I pretended to be fascinated by the tatty architecture around me. Eventually, they became bored with me and looked away, and I took a couple of shots that included them. These images weren't my best, but they were worth the little charade.

Silence is golden

Although it's a small and unobtrusive camera, the GF1 doesn't have an especially quiet shutter. Thanks to the fact that it doesn't have a mirror that must be moved out of the way before an exposure can be made, it doesn't have the clatter of many DSLRs, but the shutter makes enough noise for someone nearby to notice it firing. On a few occasions this caused my subject to look round at me, but I have a few different methods for dealing with this situation depending upon the circumstances. In the relaxed,

happy atmosphere of a local dog show I merely gave the person a cheery smile and sometimes asked if I could take a shot of them looking at the camera. In less comfortable conditions, however, I quickly pointed the camera at a slightly different angle and pretended to take an entirely different shot.

On one mission out along the South Bank of the Thames, I had a lot of fun photographing tourists. There are so many people taking photographs in this area that the click of another shutter firing is of no consequence. It's easy to pretend that you're photographing the same subject as someone else, when actually you're photographing them. I had been doing this when I spotted a father with two young children peering over the embankment wall looking down onto the foreshore beneath (see above right). I don't know exactly what was keeping them so enthralled, but I had enough time to fire off half a dozen shots and produced one of my favourite images of this challenge.



An aperture of $f/1.8$ has defocused the background nicely here

Lens choice

One of the reasons why I was pleased to be able to use the GF1 rather than a compact camera was that it meant I could change lenses. However, once I started using the Lumix G Vario 20mm $f/1.7$ pancake lens, I became addicted to it. On the Micro Four Thirds camera this optic has an effective focal length of 40mm, so objects in the image appear close to how we see them with our eyes. There were a couple of occasions when I was a little envious of Barney's 28mm lens, but on the whole the 40mm option suited me well, allowing a comfortable distance between me and my subject. I also really enjoyed the depth of field control afforded by the $f/1.7$ aperture.

Final thoughts

During this challenge I realised that, although I enjoyed photographing at the dog show the most, I am not an especially timid photographer and I don't have a problem shooting in slightly uncomfortable surroundings. However, there were a couple of potential subjects that I didn't

“The pressure of having to get some images in a short time frame added an extra element of excitement and a greater sense of purpose”

This sleepy trio were awaiting their turn in the showground ring. It was the larger dog's eyes that first attracted my attention, but I also liked the triangular arrangement of the three dogs together

photograph. For instance, I chose not to photograph a homeless woman sitting cross-legged, looking dejected and unwell, under an archway. The shot called out to be taken from close-to and I felt too exposed. If the woman saw me I wouldn't know what to say to her, so I didn't take the shot despite that fact that it might

spark volumes about the problem of homelessness.

I enjoy street photography, but I normally shoot under my own steam without a deadline. The pressure of having to get some images in a short time frame added an extra element of excitement and a greater sense of purpose. I recommend it.



Q&A

Neg colour adjustments

Neil Stoltz asks I have been using a slide mount adapter to take images of some colour negative files, but I am having difficulty reversing them and adjusting the colour in Adobe Photoshop CS3. How can I achieve an acceptable result?

Richard Sibley replies

There are a few different ways, but perhaps one of the simplest is to use the Levels adjustment feature. The first stage is to open your image in Adobe Photoshop and select Image>Adjustments>Invert. Your image should now have a light blue/cyan cast. To remove this, open the Levels tool (Image>Adjustments>Levels) and change the Channel to Red. Now move the shadow marker so that it lines up with the darkest point on the histogram and align the highlight marker so it aligns with the highlight point on the histogram. Now select the Green and Blue channels and perform the same adjustments to these channels. Once finished, the worst of the colour cast should be neutralised and you can fine-tune any of the standard colour adjustment options, such as Hue/Saturation or Color Balance – both of which are found in the Image>Adjustments menu.

For more details and an example of this technique in use, see *Using Levels for colour adjustment* in AP 1 November 2008.



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More questions & answers available at...

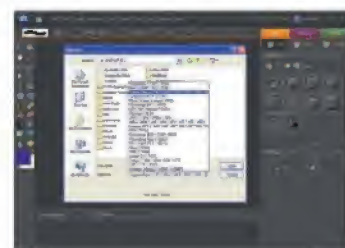
Geo-tagging

Tom Shields asks Next year I will be going travelling around the world, visiting many remote locations, including Mongolia and the rainforests of Brazil, and I will be taking plenty of photos while I'm away. I've been looking at ways to geo-tag the images taken on my Canon EOS 40D so I know exactly where they were taken, but the solution appears to be using the expensive Canon WFT-E3A wireless file transmitter and a separate GPS unit. This is going to cost around £800, which I can't afford. Is there an alternative solution?

Richard Sibley replies You're in luck, Tom, as the Jobo PhotoGPS is just what you need. It attaches to your camera's hotshoe and records your location every time an image is taken. When you get back from your travels, you can use the software supplied with the unit to transfer the GPS co-ordinates of each picture to be embedded in the image file.

I tested the PhotoGPS in AP 11 April and gave it the maximum five-star rating. I found it easy to use, accurate, and you can even select it to add nearby locations of interest to the keywords in the image file.

The Jobo PhotoGPS costs £169.99. For more information visit www.intro2020.co.uk.



Out in the Elements

Raymund Livesey asks In *The Last Resort* in AP 5 September, it says to 'Open Adobe Photoshop Elements Editor'. Where is it? I have been through every drop-down menu and have tried 'Help', but with no

Do you have a photographic question that you would like answered?

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique – here at AP we have the team that can help you.

Simply send your questions to: apanswers@ipcmedia.com or by post to: AP Answers, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Question

It can often be confusing when you plug in a hard disk drive, flash drive or memory card to find that the capacity of the storage device is less than the quoted capacity.

Operating systems often add some data to the drive, but the main reason for this discrepancy is the way most manufacturers

FROM THE AP FORUM

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Your questions answered



Shine control

Fhyder asks As part of a catalogue shoot, I shot pictures of some pairs of shiny ladies' shoes. These have prominent hotspots courtesy of the studio flash. Can anyone suggest a way to shoot such items, but avoid the hotspots other than post-production in Photoshop?

beejaybee replies Try dabbing the shiny bits with Blu-Tack to take the reflection down a bit if you must use flash.

Fen replies Rub the shoes with a banana skin. It makes the shine less prominent, but obviously make sure you have permission first.

deddard replies You could try using a polarising filter. As long as the shine isn't from metal, it should work reasonably well.

Terrywoodenpic replies Professional photographers use Dulling Spray, which is available from Calumet for around £10, for uncontrollable highlights. Prior to that we used putty, as it is based on linseed oil and seldom causes damage (but check it out first).

luck. I have looked in the index of *Photoshop Elements 6 For Dummies* and it isn't mentioned.

Richard Sibley replies Adobe Photoshop Elements version 5 and 6 are separated into four different modules: Organise, Fix, Create and Share. From the main Organiser window, select the image you wish to edit and select the Fix tab and then the Full Edit option. This then opens up the Elements Edit module so you can work with and edit your image.

External storage

Edward Little writes In AP 29 August, an answer is given to a query on affordable external storage media. This sort of question often appears in the photographic press, and while external hard drives are often recommended they tend to be of the all-in-one variety. I

would like to suggest an alternative: buy a hard drive enclosure and then buy or use an existing 2.5in hard drive. These enclosures can be used for either IDE or SATA hard drives, and connect to the computer via USB and in some cases E-SATA connections. The advantage of this system is that, when full, a new hard drive can be bought for use in the same enclosure.

Richard Sibley replies External hard drive cases are readily available from stores like Maplin, PC World and Dabs.com. They are great for those people looking for a way of making use of an old hard drive from a desktop PC or laptop that may be sitting redundant.

However, scales of economy mean that photographers looking for extra storage for their images would be better buying a pre-built hard drive and case as it is usually cheaper.

incorrectly use a decimal system to work out hard disk drive capacity to make it easier to understand. However, computers operate using a binary system, not a decimal one.

Each magnetic disk in a hard drive contains sectors which always hold 512 bytes of data. The capacity of a hard disk drive is calculated by the number of sectors on each disk. For example, if a disk has 2,097,152 sectors, it can hold 1,073,741,824 bytes of data. Most people assume that a kilobyte is 1,000 bytes, but as digital devices use binary, it is actually 1,024 bytes. Similarly, one megabyte is actually

1,024 kilobytes or 1,048,576 bytes.

The confusion arises with how manufacturers describe this data. A 250GB hard drive may contain 488,397,168 sectors, or 250,059,350,016 bytes. If you take this figure as a decimal, which is what manufacturers do, you would assume that this drive can hold 250GB of data. However, if you divide 250,059,350,016 bytes by 1,073,741,824 (the number of bytes in a gigabyte), you get 232.885918, so the true capacity of the hard disk advertised as 250GB is actually 232.88GB, which is what the computer will show. Richard Sibley

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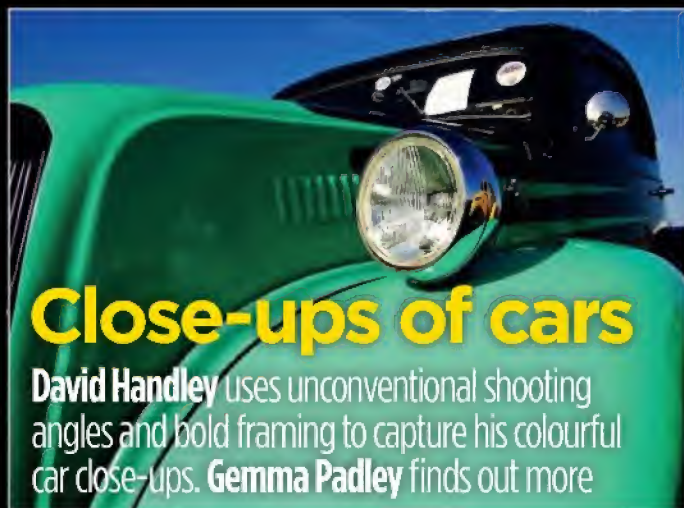
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Barney Britton tests Nikon's latest model

APOY Results

AP 09

We reveal the top 30 winners in the **Bold Colour** round of our **Amateur Photographer of the Year** competition



Close-ups of cars

David Handley uses unconventional shooting angles and bold framing to capture his colourful car close-ups. **Gemma Padley** finds out more

Lens test

Geoffrey Crawley tests two wideangle zoom lenses from **Sigma** and **Tokina** designed for the APS-C format

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This exclusive tour will take place from 8-11 November in the beautiful English Lake District and will be limited to just 14 photographers, to ensure the maximum tuition and guidance throughout.

Based in the heart of the Lakes, in the beautifully situated Glenridding Hotel on the shores of Lake Ullswater, the group will use a private minibus to travel to locations further afield. Charlie Waite, the founder of Light & Land, has a wealth of experience photographing Lakeland landscapes and is

an expert at finding those magical compositions that often elude others.

The Lake District provides an astonishing variety of landscapes: from the bucolic beauty of sheep grazing in the Newlands Valley and the stark setting of the Neolithic Castlerigg Stone Circle beneath shapely Blencathra, to the lovely wooded shores of Rydal Water, the awesome Hard Knott Pass and the towering bulk of the Scafell range, England's highest mountain.

The evenings will provide the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on your work. This tour is designed to appeal to digital and film photographers of all levels and experience, regardless of the format they use.

Charlie Waite



Damien Demolder

INFORMATION

Dates: 8-11 November 2009

Price: £830 per person before 30 September, £895pp after 30 September

Includes: Full-board accommodation, with daily packed lunch, transport during tour, tuition from Charlie Waite and Damien Demolder.

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Technique Street Photography

Amateur
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Technique

Street photography

Some of the most memorable photographs from the 20th century fall into the street photography category.

Angela Nicholson explains how to try it for yourself



STREET photography is the term used to loosely describe a type of documentary photography that involves taking pictures of everyday life in our towns, villages, streets and lanes. It often makes the ordinary seem extraordinary and provides a commentary on the world around us. It is personal to the photographer and the subjects, and is often 'of the moment'. At its best it can reveal the humour, pathos, routine or even heroics that make up our daily existence.

Although many people, including non-photographers, recognise and appreciate the work of some of the great street photographers like Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank, we live in paranoid times and some are suspicious of people taking photographs. Not everybody appreciates being photographed, so it pays to be careful, make sure you only shoot where you are allowed to and, if possible, adopted a casual, relaxed manner. That isn't always easy when you half expect a Police Community Support Officer to tap on your shoulder at any moment, but I hope the advice in this article will help and encourage you to give it a go.

Be prepared

Most of us have walked down a street, perhaps on the way to the office or the pub, and been struck by the thought that a particular scene would make a good photograph. If we are lucky there is enough time to retrieve a camera from our bag or pocket, but some events are so fleeting that you need to have the camera in your hand, set up and ready to fire. The key is to go out expecting to see something to photograph and actively look for it, so when it happens you are prepared. The improved battery life of most modern digital cameras means that you can keep your camera switched on for the majority of your expedition without worrying that it will run out of power by the end of the day.

Exposure

When you first step out onto the street, check that your camera is set to a suitable sensitivity setting, or is



The girl's expression drew me to take this shot

loaded with suitable film. A setting of ISO 400 is often a good choice as it is slow enough to keep noise (or grain) levels down, but also provides plenty of scope for fast shutter speeds and moderate apertures. As nightfall and/or winter approaches you may need to push the sensitivity setting higher.

A shutter speed of 1/200sec is sufficient to freeze most walking subjects and camera shake (depending upon the focal length of the lens in use), but you might want to consider something a little slower if you plan to introduce some blur.

An aperture of f/8 is a good starting point that provides reasonable depth of field, but doesn't restrict shutter speed too much. However, a larger aperture of f/2.8 or greater gives much more separation between your subject and its background.

Focusing

Many modern cameras have an automatic AF point selection mode that usually targets the nearest subject and focuses on it. If you're lucky it will select the subject you have in mind, but it takes control away from the photographer and it is often better to determine the AF point yourself. With stationary subjects there may be enough time to toggle around the screen to activate the correct AF point, but when you need to be quick it is better to pre-select the central

AF point and use the 'half-press to focus then recompose' technique. The central AF point usually has the advantage of being more sensitive than the surrounding points.

Another approach is to use the time-honoured street photographer's technique of selecting an aperture of f/11 or smaller, setting the camera to manual focus and pre-focusing the lens to the hyperfocal distance or the distance at which you wish to photograph your subject (perhaps 2m or 3m). This may not have the absolute accuracy of focusing precisely upon the point of interest, but the depth of field should ensure it is acceptably sharp and it frees you up to concentrate on the composition.

Subjects

Although many street photographs include people, they don't have to. A shot of a car parked in the only yellow-lined section of an otherwise empty street, for example, raises questions about the driver's state of mind or what the street might have looked like a few hours ago.

While you can shoot random images sporadically, it can be helpful to have a project in mind. It might be to document life in the cul-de-sac where you live, or a childhood haunt. Having a project can be a useful introduction to potential subjects or to anyone asking what you are doing.

Inanimate objects are a good place to start with street photography, and after getting a few shots you should start to feel more confident and ready to tackle people pictures.

Places with a happy, friendly atmosphere, like a farmer's market or a music festival, can be a good introduction to street photography that includes people. Many subjects will happily pose and won't be too upset about being caught unawares.

Some shots of people need to be taken before they realise what you are doing so you capture the moment, but don't be afraid to ask someone if they mind you photographing them. With a market stall holder, for example, you might want to start with a fairly straight portrait shot, but then ask them to carry on with their work. After a while you will both start to relax and you can get some natural shots of their interaction with the customers.

Monochrome or colour

While we most commonly associate street photography with black & white images, Martin Parr's work demonstrates that colour shots can work just as well. Many digital photographers have the luxury of being able to shoot both monochrome and colour images by shooting simultaneous raw and JPEG files (with the camera set to black &



Taken during a break at a local ploughing match

white). Shooting (or converting to) monochrome images is a good way of dealing with distracting colours, helping the message of a picture to be conveyed more clearly.

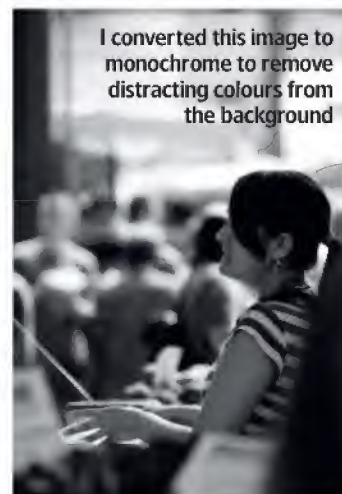
Kit

Just about any camera can be used for street photography, with each type having its pros and cons. Turn to page 46 to find out how the AP technical team got on using three different camera systems – a DSLR, a new Micro Four Thirds hybrid and a compact camera.

Lens focal length is an important consideration. Optics with short effective focal lengths, such as 24mm or 28mm, are useful for capturing the wider view and have greater depth of field than longer lenses. However, telephoto optics are a good choice if you want to pick out details or tightly frame distant subjects. They are often a good choice for a shy or nervous street photographer. Don't forget the standard 50mm lens as these optics usually have a large maximum aperture, which is great for low light or minimising depth of field. They also produce images that are similar to what we see naturally with our eyes. **AP**



I used the Sigma DP1's distance scale to set the focus manually to allow me to capture these women gossiping on the tube



I converted this image to monochrome to remove distracting colours from the background

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Amateur Photographer ICONS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

If iconic status among classic cameras should be awarded primarily to those that advance camera design and practicality with innovation, then the Praktina series of SLRs, created during the 1950s in what was then East Germany, are assuredly icons of 35mm photography. Manufactured for only eight years by the original manufacturer of the Praktica range, Kamera-Werke in Niedersiedlitz, the Praktina was a better engineered, more rugged and more reliable camera than the Praktica and was from the outset meant for professionals. It was intended as a competitor for the Exakta system, extensively used for scientific and laboratory photography, and went through several important developments and models between 1952 and 1960.

The Praktina was the first SLR with an internal automatic diaphragm, the first SLR with an accessory electric motordrive, the first SLR with an accessory back holding bulk film and, according to many enthusiasts, the first 35mm SLR system with full interchangeability. Proponents of the Praktina as the first system SLR say that, because the Exakta Vares system lacked interchangeable backs and a motordrive, it did not qualify as a system camera.

I cannot support the proposition that the Exakta was not a true system camera. I believe that the Exakta system was almost complete by the standards of its time when the Praktina first appeared in 1953. On the other hand, it is indisputable that the Praktina quickly became a more complete system and, by the time manufacturing was phased out in 1960, it was far closer to the system

ICONIC CAMERAS

It might surprise some not in the know, but **Ivor Matanle** says East Germany's Praktina cameras were real classics

Praktina



ideal later represented by Nikon, Pentax and Minolta than the Exakta ever became.

So what was different?

The Praktina had from the start many of the key attributes of a true system camera. The Praktina shown at the 1952 Leipzig Fair had interchangeable lenses, interchangeable viewfinders, a removable back and a pawl for motordrive. It also seems to have been one of the earliest 35mm SLRs to have a built-in Galilean optical viewfinder for the standard lens, as an alternative to the reflex viewfinder. Only the early Alpa Reflexes of the

A 1960s Praktina IIA fitted with the 50mm f/2 Flexon standard lens, fully automatic diaphragm and 12V electric motordrive

1940s preceded the Praktina in having a direct vision finder as well as a reflex finder. Subsequent Alpa 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 reflexes (and their leverwind variants 5b, 6b and so on) also had direct vision finders, as did the Japanese Asahiflex cameras of the mid-1950s. Direct-vision finders were provided for use in bad light, and the need for them decreased as reflex screens became brighter.

Instead of the 42mm screw lens mount of the Praktica and Contax/Pentacox cameras, and the simple bayonet of the Exakta, the Praktina had the world's first breechlock



A Praktina FX (FX-A) of 1954-55 with 58mm f/2 Biotar, semi-automatic diaphragm and the Rapid Sequence Spring Winder. This FX is fitted with a later IIA prism with the logo on the front



lens mount on a 35mm camera. Like the Canon SLR mount of some seven years later, the lens fitted into the mount and the locking ring was twisted to secure the lens. Because the mating surfaces of the lens and the camera did not move relative to each other, wear was minimised and accuracy maintained. Beneath the camera lens mount was a lever that released the lock that held the viewfinder prism in place. The prism could then slide backwards, to be replaced by a waistlevel finder. Later options included a magnifying finder and a prism with a selenium exposure meter.

The cameras

The first Praktina of 1952/53 is scarce both here and in the USA. It was essentially similar to the Praktina FX that followed it, but had three flash sockets instead of two – the middle socket, between the F and X synchronisation points, was an earth, or ground socket. In late 1953, the flash synchronisation contacts were changed to be X (electronic) and F (focal-plane bulbs), and the camera became the Praktina FX. This version still had no automatic diaphragm actuator and could be used only with preset or simple-diaphragm lenses.

In 1954, the Praktina FX gained true automatic diaphragm actuation, although still with only semi-automatic diaphragm lenses, and this version is known to some as the FX-A. It came with a choice of the 58mm f/2 Zeiss Biotar, one of the great lenses of SLR history, the lower-priced 50mm f/2.8 Zeiss Tessar, or, particularly in the USA, the 50mm f/1.9 Steinheil Quinon. These standard lenses were equipped with a semi-automatic diaphragm – before focusing, a spring-loaded lever mounted under the lens opened the diaphragm to full aperture for focusing. When the shutter release was pressed, the actuator in the camera body moved outwards and

This Praktina FX is set up for stereo (3D) photography, with the binocular stereo viewfinder and the Carl Zeiss beam splitter fitted to the 58mm f/2 Biotar



A Praktina FX with 58mm f/2 Biotar and mid-1950s Carl Zeiss lenses: the rare 75mm f/1.5 Biotar (back) and a 135mm f/4 Triotar (centre), 35mm f/2.8 Flektogon and 135mm f/4 Sonnar. In front is a set of extension tubes



pushed a pin on the back of the lens to release the diaphragm to the preset aperture before the shutter fired.

The Praktina IIA of 1958 was the first model to have lenses with fully automatic diaphragms, although the manufacturer made something of a mess of its historic compatibility by designing the diaphragm actuating mechanism of the IIA to work differently to that of the Praktina FX. When the shutter release of a IIA is pressed, the camera's diaphragm actuator retreats into the camera body, allowing the actuating pin of the lens to spring out rather than being pushed in. When the camera is wound after the exposure, the pin pushes out again, setting the lens diaphragm back to full aperture. The FX diaphragm control is exactly the opposite, so you cannot use semi-auto lenses for an FX on a IIA or the auto lenses of a IIA on an FX. The fully automatic diaphragm lenses for the IIA are now much sought after and can be recognised by the narrow band of leather that forms the focusing grip.

Other key differences between the Praktina IIA and the FX were the use of the international shutter speed scale (1/30sec, 1/60sec, 1/125sec) instead of the 1/25sec, 1/50sec, 1/75sec, 1/100sec of the Praktina FX, and the reduction of the number of flash contacts to one. The Praktina IIA was manufactured only from 1958 to mid-1960, so that only some 25,000 were made. They are far less common than the Praktina FX, which was still being closed out by Wall Street Camera in New York, along with a good range of lenses, as late as the mid-1970s.

The lenses

The Praktina was one of the principal SLRs available on the world market from 1955–1960, although, because of import controls, it was little known in the UK. Major lens manufacturers in the East and the West competed to offer lenses in Praktina mount, just as they did to supply lenses in M42 or Exakta mount. Enna of Munich was manufacturing in the mid-1950s good-quality lenses to fit all sorts of cameras and was an early supplier for Praktina. Other West German manufacturers whose

lenses were mounted for Praktina included Schacht of Ulm and Steinheil. However, the main lines of Praktina lenses were made in East Germany, by Carl Zeiss in Jena and Meyer in Görlitz. Generally, the Zeiss lenses are of a superior specification and optical quality to those from Meyer, and this is normally reflected in the price. Praktina lenses from Carl Zeiss ranged from the 25mm Flektogon to the 500mm Fernobjektiv, those from Meyer from the 35mm f/4.5 Primagon to the 400mm f/5.5 Tele-Megor through all the usual focal lengths. Lenses at the extremes

A Praktina IIA and 50mm f/2 Flexon with 35mm f/2.8 Flektogon, 25mm f/4 Flektogon, 120mm f/2.8 Biometar and 80mm f/2.8 Biometar lenses



1952
Prototype
Praktina
shown at
Leipzig Fair

Death of King George VI.
US occupation of Japan ends.
General Eisenhower wins US presidential election.

1953
First Praktina
goes on
market

US announces it has the hydrogen bomb.
North Sea floods kill over 2,000 in the UK and the Netherlands.
Watson and Crick discover structure of DNA molecule.

of aperture or focal length are quite rare and very expensive. Those of 35mm, 135mm and 180mm (in the Meyer range) are more affordable and the fairly common 135mm f/4 Zeiss Triotar turns up for as little as £20.

How much do they cost?

Praktinas have a way of developing hard-to-spot shutter problems that amateur eBay sellers may not spot. If you can buy from a dealer who knows his classics you will probably get a better deal than from internet sellers, even if the initial price is higher. As a guide, recent eBay offers, many from the USA or Germany, have included an FX with 58mm f/2 Biotar at £75.76 Buy it Now, a Ila with f/2.8 Tessar at £169.10 Buy it Now and an FX with 50mm f/2.8 Tessar, which sold at auction for £21.98 plus postage from Germany. A 35mm f/4.5 Primagon sold for £18.18 plus postage and a 400mm Tele-Megor for only £7.58 plus postage from the USA.



1954
Praktina FX-A
appears with diaphragm actuator

First nuclear submarine, *USS Nautilus*, launched. Roger Bannister runs first four-minute mile. Meat rationing ends in Britain.

1958
Praktina IIA and 50mm f/2 Flexon
announced

Munich air disaster kills eight Manchester United players. Bertrand Russell founds Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

1959
Praktina production ends

Britain grants independence to Cyprus. Alaska becomes 49th state of USA. Dalai Lama flees Tibet.



Accessories

AS would be expected of a 1950s SLR system promoted as having more capability than the Exakta system, the Praktina range of accessories was substantial and included microscope adapters, devices for scientific photography with spectrometers and other instruments, and a vast range of filters, lens hoods, bellows units and equipment for close-up photography.

Where the Praktina accessories range excelled was in the area of automated winding. Each of the cameras had a motordrive pawl in the base, and this was capable of working with three different wind accessories. The simplest was the rapid lever wind – remember that the cameras themselves had knob wind. The rapid lever wind was attached to the tripod bush, engaged with the drive pawl and provided lever wind on the base of the camera. More significant was the Rapid Sequence Spring Winder, a clockwork motor with

Back row l-r: Double cable release for using semi-auto lens on bellows, extension tubes and bellows focusing slide. Middle row l-r: accessory shoe, metering prism, waist-level finder, magnifier finder, split-image focusing screen and eyecup. Front row l-r: Adapter, base-mounting lever-wind and plain focusing screen

its own shutter button that fitted to the base of the camera and made it possible to shoot up to ten photographs in rapid succession, with the motor winding the film and shutter between each exposure. Much more significant was the electric motor with remote magnetic control. This not only permitted rapid sequence photography for as long as the separate 12V power pack held up, and for as long as there was film to wind, but could also be remotely operated from as much as 25 metres from the camera. This was, at the time, by far the best 35mm camera available for wildlife photography, especially when used with the 17-metre film back.

Some of the Enna lens range with a Praktina FX that has a 50mm f/2.8 Tessar and the correct FX prism. L-r: 135mm f/3.5 tele-Ennalyt, 135mm f/2.8 Tele-Ennalyt, 95mm f/2.8 Ennalyt and 240mm f/4.5 Tele-Ennalyt

If you're buying

Watch out for... Shutter not quite closing

The commonest problem with the Praktina can be hard to spot. The first sign of a shutter needing servicing is the second blind not quite latching with the first after an exposure. Bad examples are obvious as there is a visible gap between the blinds. But commonly you have to take the lens off, open the back, wind and fire the camera, and hold it up to a grey sky or a window, with a jacket or cloth over your head to keep out light, while you look carefully at the left-hand side of the shutter aperture for any sign of light peeping through.

Sluggish diaphragm

With semi-auto or auto diaphragm lenses, make sure the diaphragm snaps shut the moment the shutter is fired.

Stiff focusing

The lubricant in lenses more than 50 years old has commonly dried out, leaving the focusing mount stiff and in need of lubrication.

You may also like...

An Exakta Varex IIb, which is easier to find and cheaper to buy.



Thanks to Don Baldwin of the PCCGB for the loan of the cameras and equipment illustrated in this article.

Visit my blog at www.classic-camera.net/page/editors-view.aspx

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The Photographic Collectors' Club of Great Britain holds regional meetings, runs a quarterly postal auction and publishes magazines full of classic camera information. Visit www.pccgb.com for more information and to download a membership form or call 01920 821 611 (but not to ask for valuations on cameras).

Ogden Chesnutt

... CELEBRATES HOW THE NAZI GAZPACHO OPENED HIS CREATIVE EYE IN BERLIN



OGDEN CHESNUTT An avid AP reader since birth, Ogden Chesnutt lives for photography and the sound of a tripped shutter. In the third issue of each month he'll be sharing his photographic experiences and thoughts, as well as his adventures with his camera club friend Eli.

ELI looks me hard in the eye, and then returns his attention to his pint of stout. We're at the Guinness brewery in Dublin, enjoying the second or third (who's counting) pint following our tour, and I can tell he has something important he wants to ask me because this is the third time he's tried to build up the courage. I decide I'm not going to help him. It's quite amusing watching him squirm, and so I return to the page I was reading in the new AP.

'What was it like in the war?' Eli finally asks. I lower my magazine and give him my best Clint Eastwood squint. 'Did you fight inside Germany?' 'How old do you think I am?' I ask, shocked, dropping the magazine completely. His mouth puckers to reply, and then he wisely changes his mind. It occurs to me then that maybe it's his sense of history that's off, rather than his humour. 'Well, unless it's this brewery, they're not about to give me the Guinness record any time soon,' I say, and swallow the shamrock off the top of my stout. 'What's with the questions, anyway?'

'I don't know, being here I guess,' he says. 'I go on holiday and do the same things as back home. I drink the same beer, eat the same food. And the pictures I'm taking I could be shooting back at home – we've got better churches and prettier girls.' 'Watch it,' I say. 'The Irish are unpredictable. My ex-wife is Irish.'

'Anyway, I was watching that *Band of Brothers* show on DVD. It made me realise I've never really suffered for much or experienced a foreign land like those guys did.'

'Yes, they had quite a holiday, didn't they,' I quip, but I understand his point, despite how crudely it was delivered. Unless you count buying an expensive camera for my son-in-law and forecasting the weather in Northumberland for a living, I've sacrificed very little in this life. But while I refuse to be bullied by the media into feelings of guilt for not having suffered like my forebears, I do agree with Eli that an occasional reminder of what others experienced, even if from a Hollywood studio, can help us stay grounded and see the world with fresh eyes.

In a way, holding a camera is like having a little Hollywood studio in the palm of your hand, framing and isolating what's important in the world around you. It trains you to spot the peculiarities of life and gives you appropriate cover for seeking them out. When, except as a tourist, can you walk with your camera glued to your eye and take pictures of everything in your path, frame people on the street without guilt or see a city river as anything but a filthy obstacle between you and the seller of salt beef sandwiches on the other side?

To Eli, I say that holidays are liberating for the photographer in this way. Because he so obviously stands out, he doesn't have to worry about fitting in. He's free, and while his subjects abroad may still be houses of God, the tenants have likely decorated differently or host louder parties. It's these differences to look for. But like a fugitive on the run, the freedom of being somewhere new is worth nothing if you commit the same crimes. Falling into the trap of taking record shots shackles the imagination.

It's a lesson I learned, coincidentally, while on holiday in Germany about 15 years ago. My wife and I were on a walking tour of Berlin when the old Minolta I was using

slipped from my hands in Potsdamer Platz and shattered into pieces. It was the only rubbish on the pavement, and I cursed like a fascist as I gathered the unwound frames of our holiday. An American girl in a group of cheerleaders

travelling looked down at me and screamed, 'Oh my God. Are you shot?'

Only my patience, it would appear. It was this girl who, with her repeated questions about the 'Nazi Gazpacho', caused me to drop my camera when she asked if after the war the Gazpacho served time. 'I believe, like revenge, it's served cold,' said my wife. I then screamed in delight and dropped my camera.

'Now how am I going to shoot the Brandenburg Gate?' I moaned. Feeling slightly responsible, she bought me a disposable camera at one of the wagons selling tourist items as we continued on with the tour. I shrugged my shoulders and resigned myself to flat pictures. I took a few snaps of the Reichstag on the sly, but eventually the embarrassment waned and I realised what an incredible tool this was. I was noticing everything around me rather than fussing over my aperture. And in the end I didn't even shoot the Brandenburg Gate. Instead, I was taking pictures that were more creative and thoughtful, my crown jewel being a shot of the Berlin TV tower reflected in a small puddle.

'I realised for the first time as a photographer that some of the best pictures you can take are those that aren't planned,' I say to Eli, and he sort of nods dispassionately.

'We've got puddles in England.' **AP**

“I realised for the first time that the best pictures are those that aren't planned”

amateur Photographer

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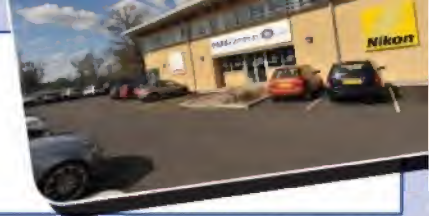
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